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THE NEW YORKER

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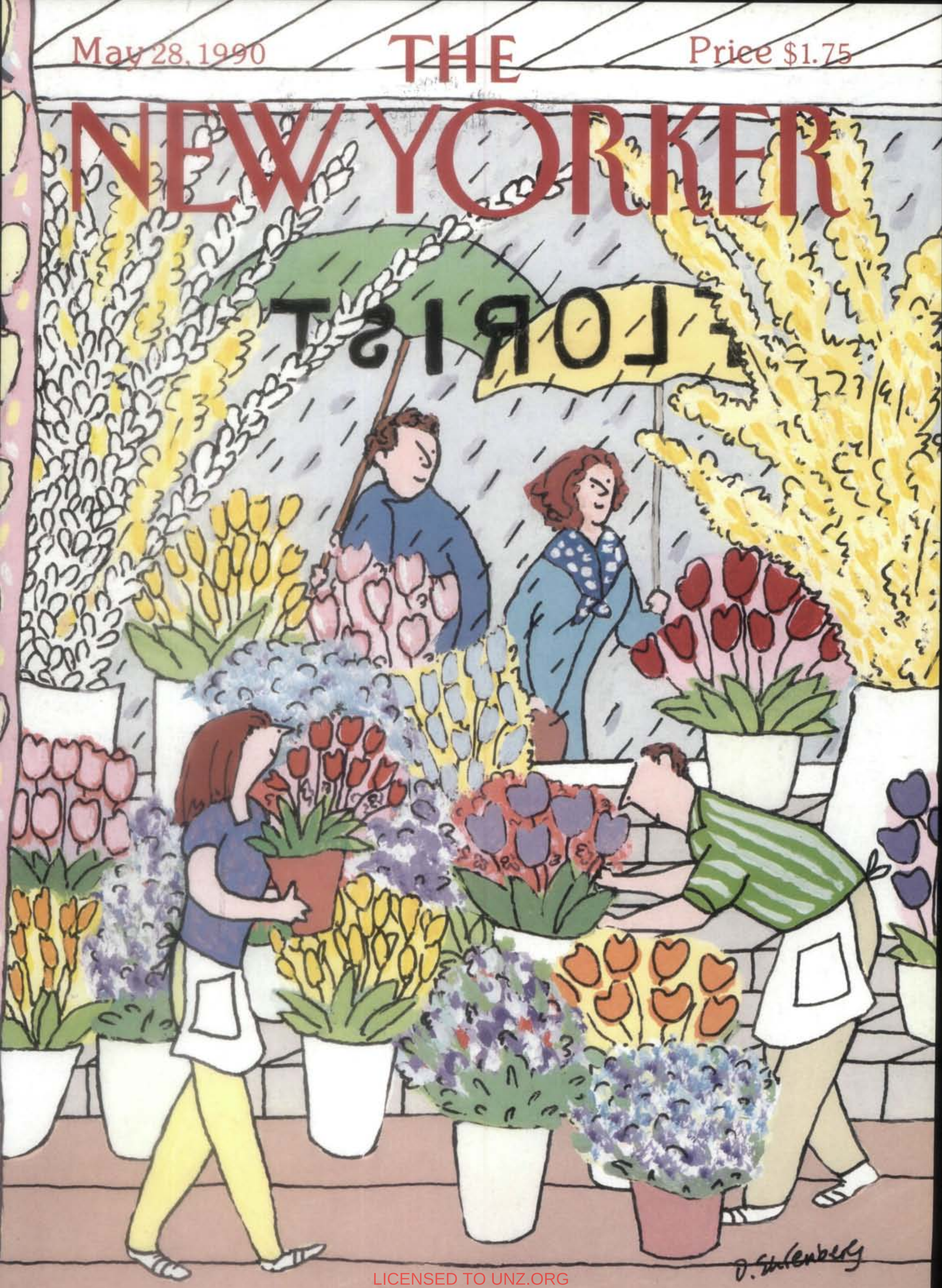
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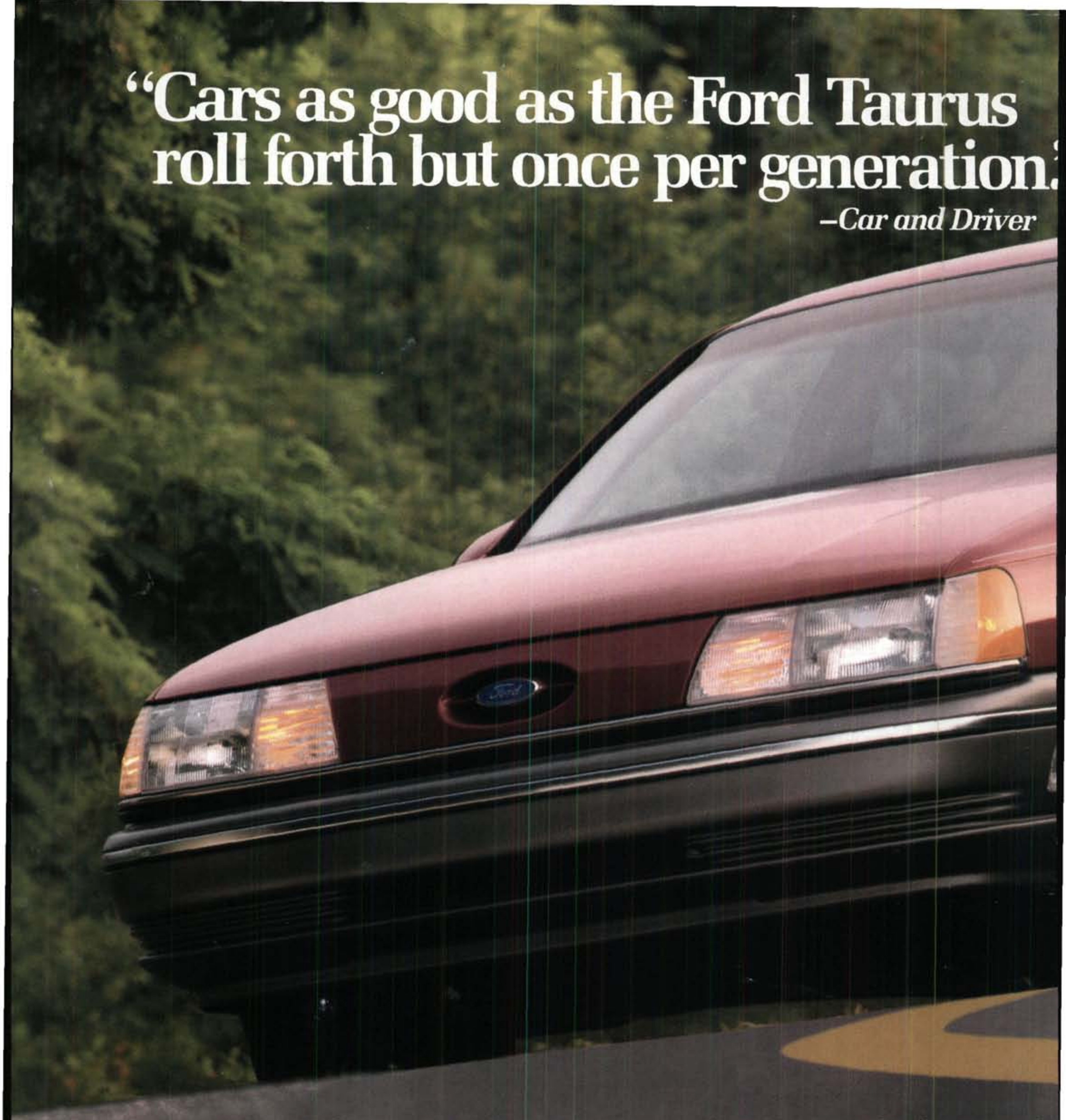
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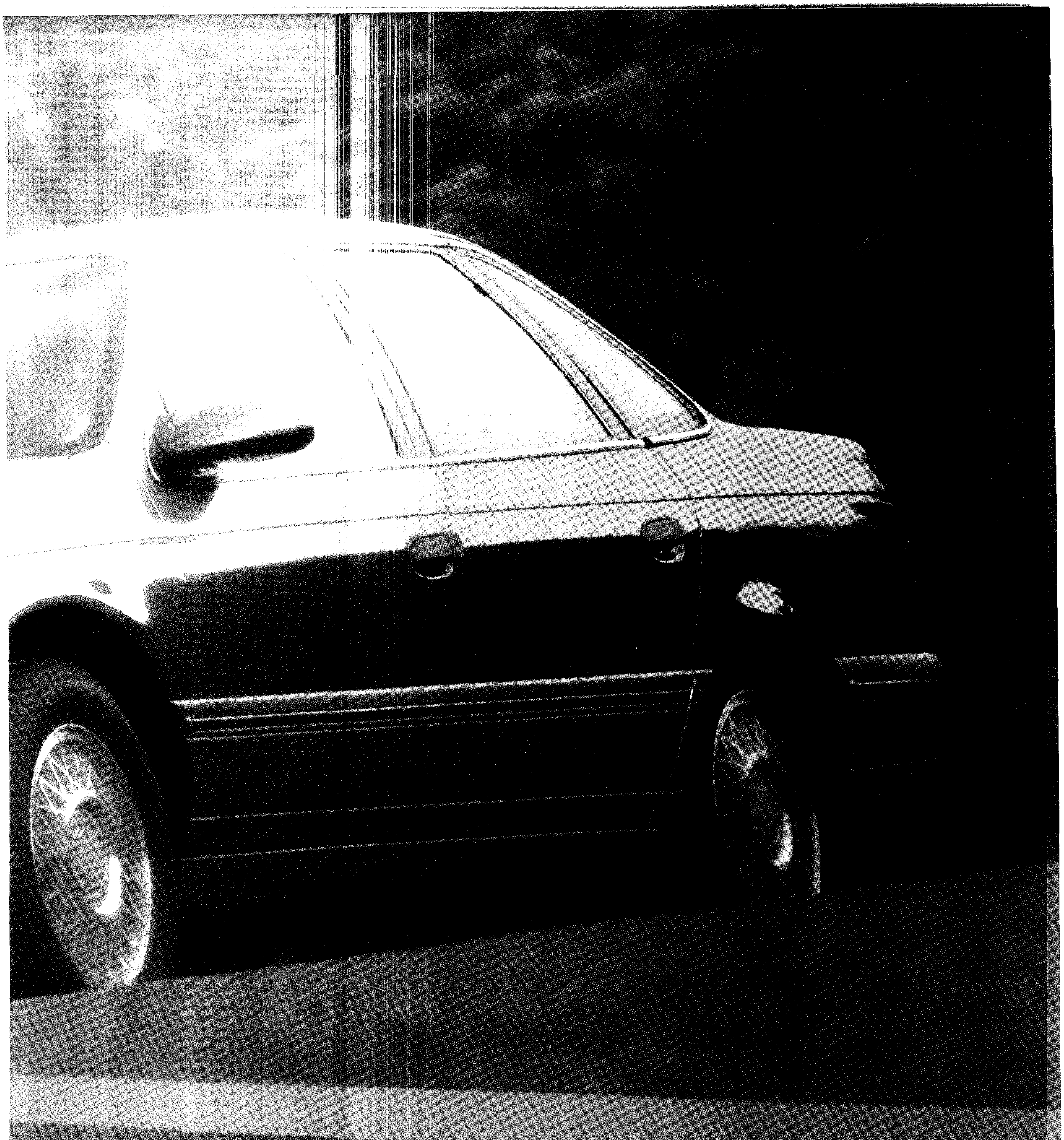

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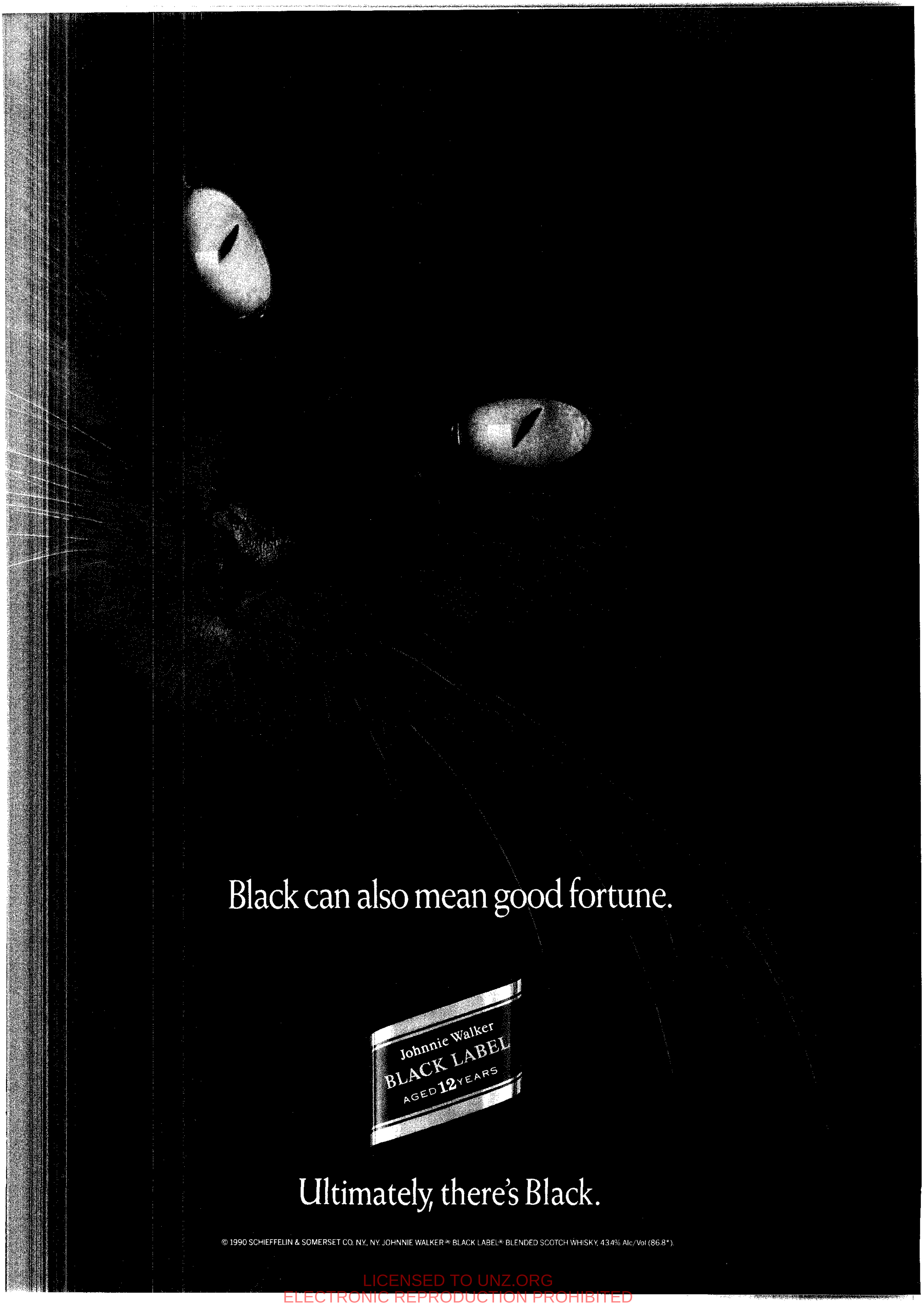
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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

At Lincoln Center's Vivian Beaumont Theatre—whither "Some Americans Abroad" has just moved (from the Mitzi E. Newhouse)—the tables that hang from the flies at the beginning of the evening are all in place. Those tables (along with other objects and bits of furniture) are what the set designer, Alexandra Byrne, has used to mirror the part-for-the-whole approach taken by the play. A camera flash at the beginning of each scene—the play concerns a whirlwind theatre tour of England undertaken by a group of American academics—clues you in to the fact that a snapshot motif is at work. A title projected above the stage locates you in, say, the Pizza Hut at Stratford-Upon-Avon; from the flies descends a table—one that so absolutely screams, say, "fast-food franchise in England" that you laugh out loud. The table is unhooked from its moorings, and is taken away after the scene is played. It's actually possible to tell how far along the play is from the amount of scenery left hanging in the rafters.

We looked in at the Beaumont the other day to see what a cast change and the move to a bigger theatre had done to the mechanics of Richard Nelson's play. The change of venue has had virtually no effect on the quality of the acting (the performances, expanding nicely to fill the larger space, are, if anything, better and sharper), but the replacement of Bob Balaban by Nathan Lane in the role of Henry has slightly altered the dynamics. Henry is the untenured professor who, unaware that he has already been replaced for the following year, has joined the theatre tour in an attempt to solidify his position in the department. Balaban played the role in an almost sinister vein; Lane is altogether more genial and sympathetic. Consequently, Colin Stinton, playing the manipulative department head, has had to tone down his performance somewhat: at the Beaumont, Stinton seems less Machiavellian.

We'd forgotten just how funny and well directed "Some Americans Abroad" is, and hadn't taken full measure of the beauty in its design. We hadn't realized, for instance, that Henry stands in exactly the position vis-à-vis his colleagues that they stand in vis-à-vis England and the British. (The same obsequious self-loathing characterizes all their behavior.) We laugh at Nelson's portrait of would-be sophisticates, yet all the while that piecemeal set—so knowing in its simplicity, and so seductive in its knowingness—is making us guilty of the very things we're laughing at Nelson's characters for.

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

Elliot Loves—Jules Feiffer's new play, directed by Mike Nichols. With Anthony Heald, Christine Baranski, Oliver Platt, David Pierce, Bruce A. Young, and Latanya Richardson. Previews begin May 25. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313.)

Hannah . . . 1939—Julie Wilson stars in a new musical by Bob Merrill. Directed by Douglas Aibel. Also with Kathleen Mahony-Bennett and Tony Carlin. In previews. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874.)

A Perfect Diamond—A comedy about baseball by Don Rifkin, with Michael Cullen and Josh Mostel. Previews through May 23. Opens May 24 at 8, and runs through June 17. (Apple Corps Theatre, 336 W. 20th St. 929-3064.)

Price of Fame—A play written by and starring Charles Grodin. Among the other cast members are Lizbeth Mackay and Jeannie Berlin. Directed by Gloria Muzio. Previews begin May 23. (Roundabout, 100 E. 17th St. 420-1883.)

Prin—Eileen Atkins in the American première of a play by Andrew Davies. John Tillinger was the director. Also with Remak Ramsay, John Curless, John Christopher Jones, Wendy Makkena, and Amy Wright. In previews. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-7907.)

A Quiet End—A play by Robin Swados, with Lonny Price, Philip Coccioletti, Rob Gomes, Paul Milikin, and Jordan Mott. Previews through May 28. Opens May 29 at 8. (Theatre Off Park, 224 Waverly Pl., at 11th St. 627-2556.)

Six Degrees of Separation—A new play by John Guare, with Stockard Channing, Kelly Bishop, Paul McCrane, James McDaniel, and John Cunningham. Jerry Zaks has directed. In previews. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

What a Man Weighs—A play by Sherry Kramer, with Richard Cox, Christine Estabrook, Harriet Harris, and Katherine Hiler. Directed by Carole Rothman. Opens May 22 at 8, and runs through June 3. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103.)

K. Todd Freeman, Danitra Vance, and Reggie Montgomery in "Spunk"

NEW THIS SEASON

Accomplice—This facetious thriller is one hundred per cent pure virgin plastic. Even the plentiful sight gags, which work well, cannot redeem the vacuity of the script. Rupert Holmes wrote the play, and Art Wolff directed it. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/14/90.) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.)

Aspects of Love—Andrew Lloyd Webber's latest extravaganza, based on David Garnett's frail 1955 novel of the same title, aspires to good taste and sophistication (it's about artists and theatre folk rather than cats or trains) but ends up being a sort of monument to vulgarity. The combination of Garnett's triviality and Lloyd Webber's pretentiousness produces something so empty it implodes. (4/23/90) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

The Cemetery Club—Eileen Heckart, Elizabeth Franz, and Doris Belack head the cast of this play by Ivan Menchell. Directed by Pamela Berlin. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 719-4099.)

By and for Havel—A pair of one-acters in revival. "By"—**audience**—is based on an episode that occurred when Václav Havel had a menial job in a brewery; "for"—**catastrophe**—is Samuel Beckett's poetic tribute to Havel when he was in prison. Together, they make an evening that is both comic and stirring. With Kevin O'Connor and Lou Brockway. (3/19/90) (John Houseman Studio Theatre, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038.)

Carreño—A show based on the life of Teresa Carreño, the Venezuelan composer, pianist, conductor, and singer. Written and performed by Pamela Ross. Directed by Gene Frankel. (Intar, 420 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof—As Maggie the Cat, Kathleen Turner seems in desperate straits in this limp and hapless revival of Tennessee Williams' most playable family melodrama. (4/2/90) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 246-0220.)

Circle Repertory Company—Presenting **each day dies with sleep**, a play by José Rivera. Featuring Erica Gimpel, Alex Colón, and Randy Vásquez. (99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100. Closes June 10.)

City of Angels—Larry Gelbart, dramatist; Cy Coleman, composer; Billy Byers, arranger; James Naughton and Gregg Edelman, leading men; and Michael Blakemore, director, are all in top form in this sharp, jokey musical satire about Hollywood in the forties. The plot concerns the making of a private-eye movie (and the unmaking of its author). The spectacular settings and costumes were designed by Robin Wagner and Florence Klotz and lighted by Paul Gallo. (12/25/89) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 246-0102.)

Closer Than Ever—This charmer amounts to an anthology of songs and sketches by Richard Maltby, Jr. (words), and David Shire (music). The fact that there is no amplification is an extra boon. (11/13/89) (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)

Ensemble Studio Theatre—Presenting the 1990 marathon of one-act plays. Series B, through June 3: "Hamlet," by Shel Silverstein; "The Stalwarts" by OyamO; "The Eclipse," by Joyce Carol Oates; and "Eulogy for Mister Hamm," by Michael John LaChiusa. (549 W. 52nd St. 247-3405.)

A Few Good Men—"Mister Roberts" meets "The Mary Tyler Moore Show." Aaron Sorkin's military-courtroom drama treats issues such as justice, honor, loyalty, and morality with the slick, facile smugness of a half-hour comedy series, but the performances, by an ace cast under Don Scardino's direction, are wonderful. (11/27/89) (Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

FOB—David Henry Hwang has directed this revival of his 1980 play, which is presented by the Pan Asian Repertory Theatre. With Dennis Dun. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 245-2660. Closes June 2.)

Forever Plaid—Jason Graae, Stan Chandler, David Engel, and Guy Stroman star in Stuart Ross's musical salute to the "guy groups" of the fifties and sixties.

aramis
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THE FRAGRANCE FOR MEN.

(Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400.)

Further Mo'—A musical about the demise of black vaudeville, put together by Vernel Bagneris, the man behind 1979's "One Mo' Time." (Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 475-5120.)

Grand Hotel—The dazzling imagination of Tommy Tune's direction and choreography and the dazzling scenery by Tony Walton almost make up for the inner vacancy of this show (except for a glorious, eccentric dance by Michael Jeter), but not quite. The story and characters are skimpy and the music is undistinguished. Nevertheless, there isn't a boring moment. (11/27/89) (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 246-0102.)

The Grapes of Wrath—This stage adaptation (by Frank Galati, who also directed) is the most truly adult version of Steinbeck's novel to date. It appeals to the mind rather than to the emotions; all the same, there's a cumulative effect. Don't go expecting to see John Ford or "Balm in Gilead," but expect to leave feeling as if you had. With Lois Smith and Gary Sinise. (4/2/90) (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Gypsy—This revival of the great Sondheim-Styne-Laurents-Robbins musical (directed by Arthur Laurents himself) is so delightful—and the cast (led by Tyne Daly, Crista Moore, and Jonathan Hadary) so engaging—that we think anyone would be happier for having seen it. One suggestion: don't applaud when Mama Rose comes down the aisle (you'll drown out the first number). Trust Broadway; you'll have ample time to welcome Miss Daly when she mounts the steps and delivers her first onstage line. (12/4/89) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 246-0102.)

Hamlet—Kevin Kline makes a private, passionate Hamlet, with all his wit and irony intact. He gives an eloquent performance in this clear, intelligent production, which he also directed. In support is Josef Sommer's fine Polonius. The deportment of everybody at the Royal Danish Court, however, is deplorable. The actors are unable to keep their hands off one another—so physical a production is inappropriate for this play. (5/21/90) (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Closes June 3.)

Ice Cream with Hot Fudge—Two plays by Caryl Churchill. "Hot Fudge" approaches familiar territory—greed and dishonesty in Western capitalist society—as though it were uncharted. "Ice Cream"—about an oafish American couple exploring their British roots—seems half an (inept) attempt to imitate the style of Pinter and half a sophomoric exercise in Yank-bashing. (5/21/90) (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

Infidelities—William Gaskill's adaptation of Marivaux's comedy "La Double Inconstance." (45th Street Theatre, 354 W. 45th St. 279-4200. Closes May 26.)

Jean Cocteau Repertory—Presenting three works in rotating repertory: **THE PRINCE OF HOMBERG,** by Heinrich von Kleist, in a translation by Douglas Langworthy (through May 25), and a double bill of Strindberg's **THE STRONGER** and Per Olov Enquist's **THE NIGHT OF THE TRIBADES** (through May 27). (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

Lettice & Lovage—The marvellous Maggie Smith plays Lettice Douffet, a freewheeling guide to England's stately homes, and the elegant Margaret Tyzack plays a reprimanding envoy sent by Lettice's employers in Peter Schaffer's merry comedy about an unlikely friendship and other matters. Paxton Whitehead and Bette Henritze are effective in supporting roles. Michael Blakemore was the director. (4/9/90) (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

Meet Me in St. Louis—If you like the old M-G-M musical, you probably won't like this stage version, which combines the earnest, wholesome values of the movie with an aesthetic of surpassing vulgarity. In any case, why see the show when you can rent the movie? (11/20/89) (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 246-0102.)

Mountain—Len Cariou is Justice William O. Douglas, and Heather Summerhayes and John C. Vennema play multiple roles as the people he encountered every step of the way, from his boyhood, in Washington State, through his thirty-six-year term on the Supreme Court. Though perhaps a bit over-reverent, the play, by Douglas Scott, is as interesting as the history it portrays. The acting is fine: Mr. Vennema's thumbnail Nixon is especially striking. (4/23/90) (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782.)

Negro Ensemble Company—Presenting **LIFETIMES ON THE STREETS.** The streets are the streets of Harlem, and this "theatrical collage" is a set of monologues by Gus Edwards, who has an acute ear and imagination. As spoken and performed by the splendid actors of the company, the words evoke a way of life as it was and as it is now. Douglas Turner Ward is both director and performer. (4/13/90) (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 246-8545. Closes May 27.)

Once on This Island—A musical by Lynn Ahrens (book and lyrics) and Stephen Flaherty (score), which is based on a novel by Rosa Guy. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes May 27.)

The Piano Lesson—August Wilson's new drama, the fourth in his series chronicling the black-American experience in the twentieth century, is set in Pittsburgh in 1936. In its exquisite writing and over-all structure (involving the conflict over a piano that figures hauntingly and intricately in one family's history) the play resembles "Joe Turner's Come and Gone" more than "Fences." Wilson takes refuge in an overly mystical and melodramatic ending, but there are some great scenes—even if the subtle ensemble acting in Lloyd Richards' production is thrown out of balance by an excessive performance by Charles S. Dutton. (4/30/90) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 582-4022.)

Prelude to a Kiss—Craig Lucas's entertaining romantic comedy slips into fantasy when an old man kisses a bride at her wedding. Barnard Hughes is the old man, Mary-Louise Parker is the bride, and Timothy Hutton is the groom. (3/26/90) (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450.)

The Rothschilds—A revival of the 1970 musical by Jerry Bock (score), Sheldon Harnick (lyrics), and Sherman Yellen (book). With a sixteen-member cast, led by Mike Burstyn. Lonny Price directed. (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330.)

Smoke on the Mountain—A gospel musical comedy conceived and directed by Alan Bailey and written by Connie Ray. With Reathel Bean and Dan Manning. (Lambs Theatre, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

Some Americans Abroad—Yank Anglophilia and self-hatred among a group of academics on their department's annual theatre tour of England. The play, by Richard Nelson, would be worth seeing if only for the quality and style of the performances—particularly from Colin Stinton and Henderson Forsythe. You could do a lot worse than this well-observed and amusing comedy of manners. (So, as the record shows, could the playwright.) (2/26/90) (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Spanish Eyes—A play by Eduardo Ivan Lopez. Three performances a week are in English; four are in Spanish. (Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 354-1293.)

Spunk—George C. Wolfe has adapted three short stories by Zora Neale Hurston, set in Harlem and the South, to make a gorgeous jazz-and-blues entertainment, giving them a powerful injection of his own mordant humor. Chic Street Man, singer and guitarist, wrote the dynamic score. With Ann Duquesnay (singer), and K. Todd Freeman, Reggie Montgomery, Kevin Jackson, and Danitra Vance (actors). Mr. Wolfe directed. (5/7/90) (Public, 425 Lafayette Street. 598-7150.)

The Tower of Evil—Kathleen Widdoes stars in a production of the 1832 historical drama "La Tour de Nesle," by Alexandre Dumas *père*. Translated from the French by Michael Feingold. (CSC, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210. Closes June 10.)

Tru—Robert Morse gives a deeply thought-out, accomplished performance as Truman Capote—by turns funny, bitchy, ironic, and rueful—at the end of his life and his tether. The play was written and directed by Jay Presson Allen. (1/1/90) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Waves—A music-theatre work based on Virginia Woolf's 1931 novel. Adapted by Lisa Peterson and David Bucknam and presented by the New York Theatre Workshop. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 279-4200. Closes June 3.)

York Theatre Company—Presenting Chekhov's **CHERRY ORCHARD.** With Paul Hecht, Penny Fuller, and David Canary. (2 E. 90th St. 534-5366. Closes June 3.)

Zoya's Apartment—Bronson Pinchot, Linda Thorson, and Robert LuPone in Mikhail Bulgakov's farce. Staged by the Soviet director Boris Morozov. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

LONG RUNS

BLACK AND BLUE: An evening of classic blues and jazz, conceived, designed, and directed by Claudio Segovia and Héctor Orezzoli, who created "Tango Argentino" in a similarly commemorative but far less visually opulent style. Musicians of renown have been assembled, and while Ruth Brown, Linda Hopkins, and Carrie Smith sing, a troupe of hoofers young and old give the tap-dance subculture a workout. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 246-0102.) . . . **CATS:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to John Napier's sets and costumes. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200.) . . . **DRIVING MISS DAISY:** Frances Sternhagen and Arthur French star in Alfred Uhry's play, which tells of the growing attachment of a cranky old woman in Atlanta to her black chauffeur. Directed by Ron Lagomarsino. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038. Closes June 3.) . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** The longest-running long run recently celebrated its thirtieth birthday. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838.) . . . **FORBIDDEN BROADWAY 1990:** A source of continual merriment, this revue is a cluster of parodies of shows along the Great White Way. Gerard Alessandrini conceived and directed it, and wrote the witty, barbed lyrics. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.) . . . **THE HEIDI CHRONICLES:** Wendy Wasserstein's play looks at first glance like standard baby-boom playwriting fare, but some alchemical combination of graceful-mindedness and good writing enables her to capture, lampoon, and transcend her generation all at the same time. With Brooke Adams. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **JEROME ROBBINS' BROADWAY:** A collection of high spots from "On the Town," "Billion Dollar Baby," "High Button Shoes," "The King and I," "Peter Pan," "West Side Story," "Gypsy," "A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum," and "Fiddler on the Roof," all of which were choreographed or directed, or both, by Jerome Robbins. (Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200.) . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** The stars of this musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel are John Napier's settings and David Hersey's lighting. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200.) . . . **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.) . . . **OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY:** Jerry Sterner's comedy about a New York corporate raider's attempt to take over a decorous New England business maintains its suspense from beginning to end. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.) . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** The much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets, everything about the show is negligible. (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200.) . . . **VAMPIRE LESBIANS OF SODOM:** Charles Busch's long-running play. (Provincetown Playhouse, 133 Macdougal St. 477-5048. Closes May 27.)

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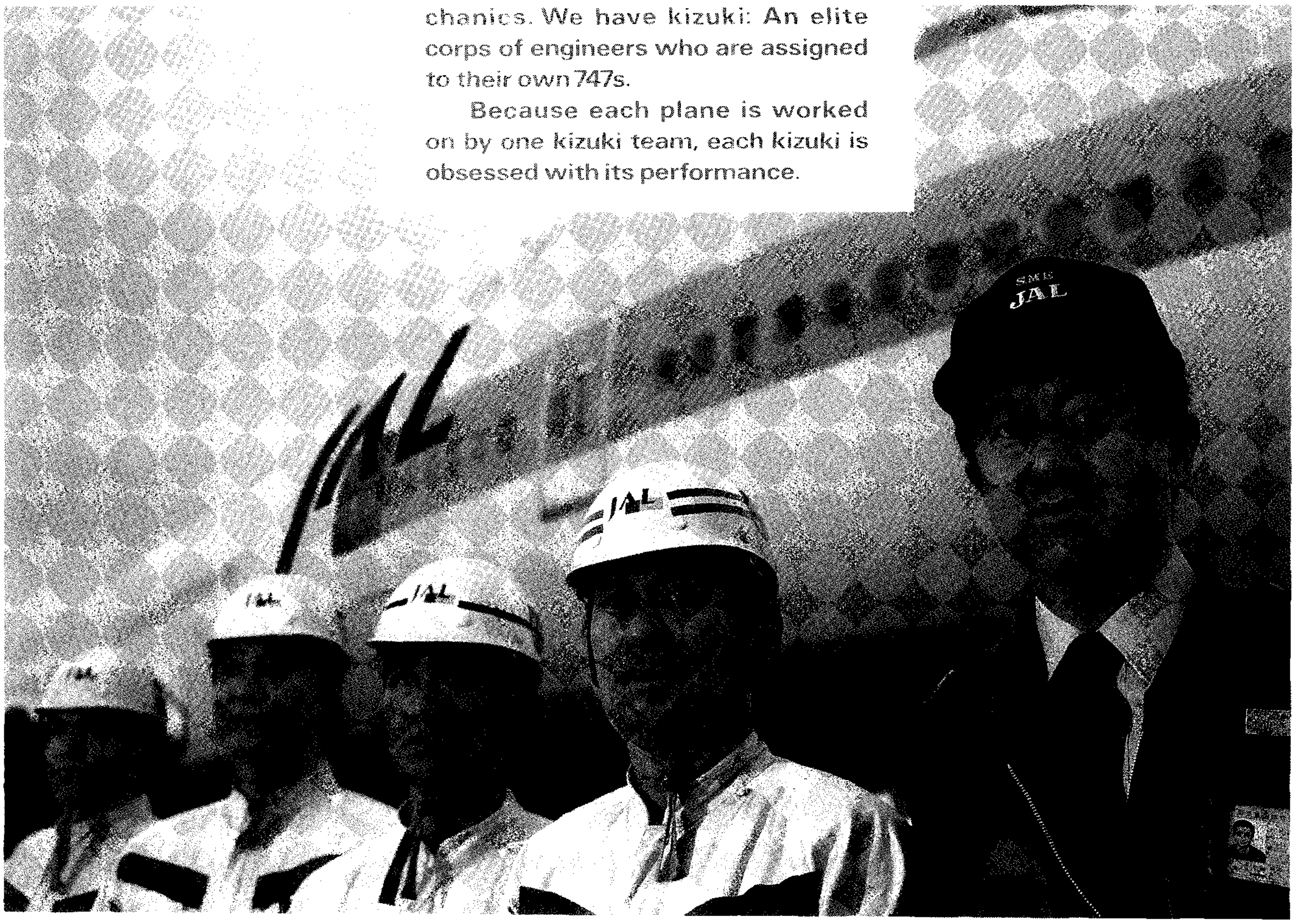

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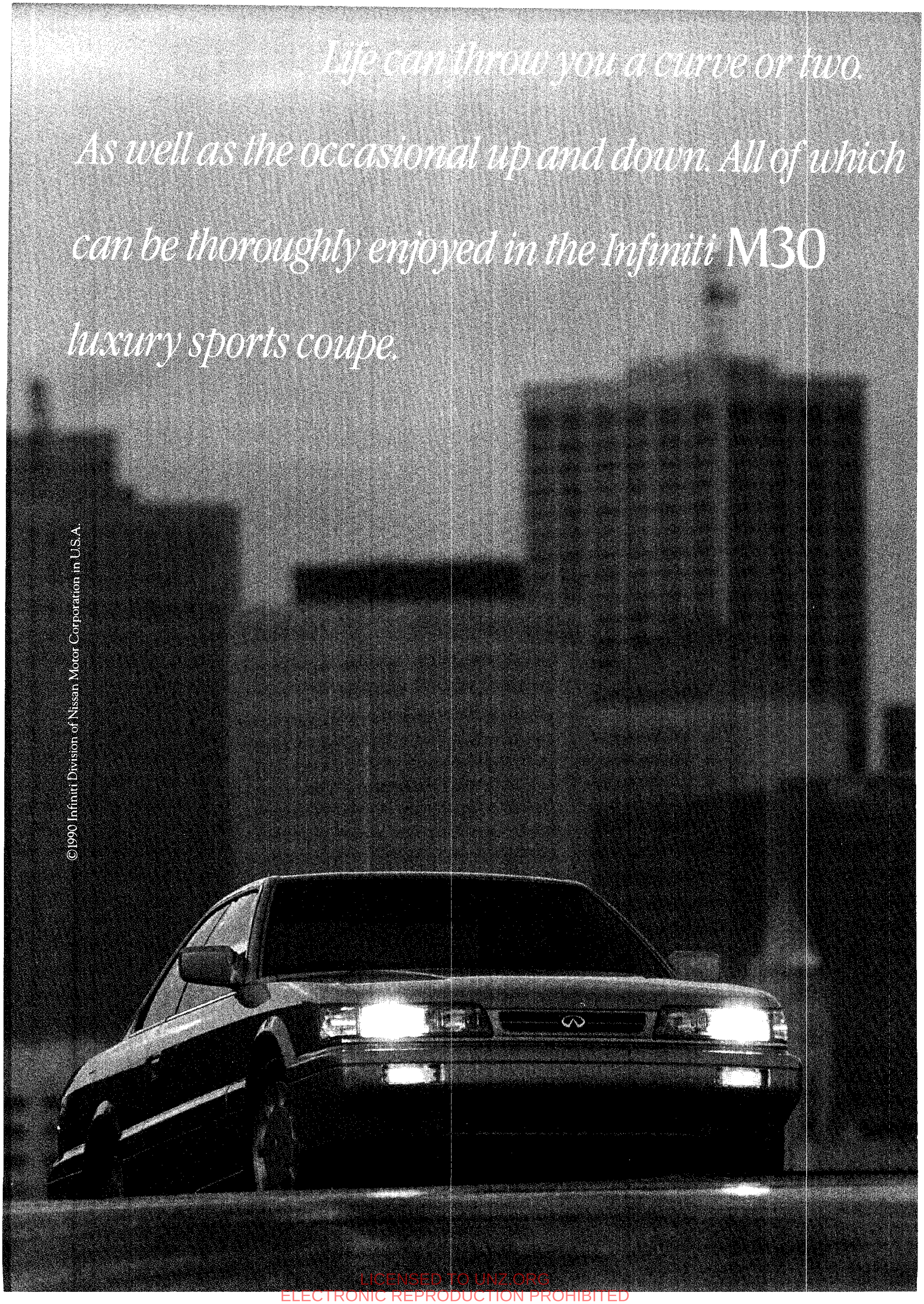
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DANCE

THIS past April, Vladimir Vasiliev, one of the greatest Bolshoi dancers of the Cold War period, celebrated his fiftieth birthday. Earlier this month, he marked the milestone publicly by giving what he said would be his last performance as Albrecht, in American Ballet Theatre's "Giselle" at the Met. Mr. Vasiliev's co-star there was his wife and longtime partner, Ekatarina Maximova. She first danced the title role in 1961, with Galina Ulanova as her coach. Mr. Vasiliev first danced Albrecht in 1965, coached by Ulanova and Alexei Yermolaev. We spoke to the couple, through a translator, Val Golovitser, a few days before their Met appearance. They had just concluded a "Giselle" rehearsal under the watchful eyes of two peers from the Kirov, the ballerinas Irina Kolpakova and Natalia Makarova.

Why did they perform their last "Giselle" in New York? we asked. "Coincidence," Mr. Vasiliev said. He wanted to dance it close to his birthday, and A.B.T., also celebrating its fiftieth this year, had the ballet in its repertory. "I finished with 'Giselle' long ago," Miss Maximova said. "But I return to it once more for him."

What sort of things did the couple need to rework for this production? Mr. Vasiliev explained that, for the most part, the A.B.T. "Giselle" had much less mime than the Bolshoi version. "There are also different endings for the ballet in different companies," he added. "Sometimes you can imagine that Albrecht dies on the grave. There are even alternate musical endings you can use, a fast one and a slow one. At A.B.T., Albrecht feels consolation at the end."

What is the hardest thing about performing "Giselle"? "Running on the stage," Mr. Vasiliev said. "The technical things you can train for and eventually get, but to walk, to listen, to act are harder. Three quarters of our rehearsals are devoted to problems of communication through movement, not to dancing as such."

Finally, we asked what they felt they had brought to "Giselle." Looking at Mr. Vasiliev, Miss Maximova said, "In 'Giselle,' Vasiliev discovered new variations and new steps, a new style and image. Before him, Albrecht was like a mold of a noble prince, a playboy. No one liked him much. He was without any special character."

"I was the first Albrecht who really *loved* Giselle," Mr. Vasiliev said. "The ballet has made me softer and more elegant."

" 'Giselle,' that's my whole life," Miss Maximova said.

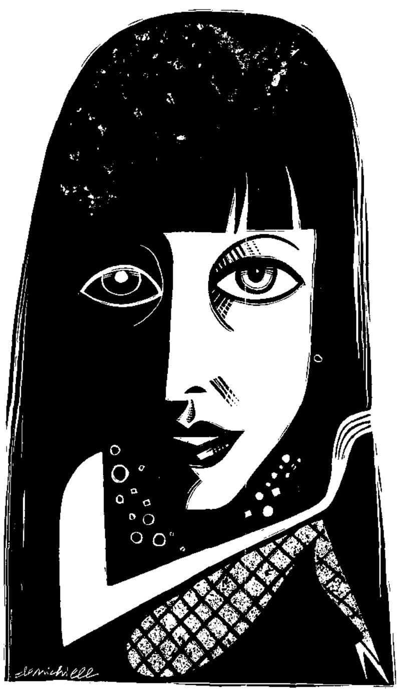
New York City Ballet—May 22 at 8: "Chaconne," "The Steadfast Tin Soldier," "Pas de Deux," and "Tchaikovsky Suite No. 3." . . . ¶ May 23 at 8: "Chaconne," "Prague Symphony," and "Who Cares?" . . . ¶ May 24 at 8: "Chaconne," "Ecstatic Orange," and "Tchaikovsky Suite No. 3." . . . ¶ May 25 at 8: "Walpurgisnacht Ballet," "The Steadfast Tin Soldier," "Les Gentilhommes," and "Stravinsky Violin Concerto." . . . ¶ May 26 at 2: "Walpurgisnacht Ballet," "Ecstatic Orange," and "Chaconne." . . . ¶ May 26 at 8: "Allegro Brillante," "Stravinsky Violin Concerto," and "Vienna Waltzes." . . . ¶ May 27 at 1: "Walpurgisnacht Ballet," "The Steadfast Tin Soldier," "Pas de Deux," and "Vienna Waltzes." . . . ¶ May 27 at 7: "Chaconne," "Ecstatic Orange," and "Who Cares?" No performances from May 28 until June 5, when a Jerome Robbins festival begins. (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

American Ballet Theatre—May 21-22 at 8 and May 23 at 2 and 8: "The Sleeping Beauty." . . . ¶ May 24 at 8: "The Leaves Are Fading," "Dark Elegies," and "Gala Performance." . . . ¶ May 25 at 8: "Birthday Offering," "Airs," "Don Quixote Pas de Deux," and "Rodeo." . . . ¶ May 26 at 2: "La Bayadère (Act II)," "Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes," "Sylvia Pas de Deux," and "Theme and Variations." . . . ¶ May 26 at 8: "Theme and Variations," "Airs," "Le Corsaire Pas de Deux," and "Rodeo." . . . ¶ May 28 at 8: "Push Comes to Shove," "Nine Sinatra Songs," and "In the Upper Room." . . . ¶ May 29 at 8: "Gala Performance," "Airs," "Sylvia Pas de Deux," and "Theme and Variations." . . . ¶ May 30 at 2: "La Bayadère (Act II)," "Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes," and "Stravinsky Violin Concerto." . . . ¶ May 30 at 8: "Airs," "Grand Pas Classique," "The Informer," and "Gala Performance." (Metropolitan Opera House. 362-6000. Through June 30.)

NIGHT LIFE

THE Polo Grounds, a sports bar at Third Avenue and 83rd Street, is decorated like a young boy's fantasy bedroom. Every inch of the place, from the free-throw game to the pennants and sepia photos to the electronic tickertape listing all the latest scores, is sports-related, and if you don't care for sports you're going to feel like a Martian. What brought us to the Polo Grounds was the first game of the Knicks-Pistons playoff series, which New York fans may not care to remember. There are several possible moods at a sports bar: elation (when the home team is fleecing the enemy), tension (a close game), and disgust (when your guys are getting trounced). The game we saw, in which the Knicks set a team record for the fewest points scored in a playoff game (the Pistons won it 112–77), was a fine example of the last. The nice thing about a sports bar, however, is that there are usually several games going on at once, and so those who couldn't bear to watch the Knicks' humiliation could turn their attention away from the two giant video screens and watch the nine smaller TVs, which offered a Mets-Giants game (better news here: the Mets won it, 4–1) and a hockey playoff game between Edmonton and Chicago.

Later, we stopped in at Manny's Car Wash (Third and 87th), an unpretentious blues club that opened recently and that offers live music nearly every night. The club's façade is decorated with 45s, and over the door is a fluorescent signboard that seems to be the only car-wash reference. Inside, the place looks like an adman's idea of a blues bar—it's long, dark, and narrow; it has brick walls, tile floors, and neon beer signs; and, the clincher, it's sparkling clean. The band onstage, Chilly Whilly, was singing about blues that had nothing to do with basketball. "How many ladies out there know what it's like to be dogged around?" the lead singer asked.



Lydia Lunch at the Knitting Factory

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—**MARGARET WHITING**—whose father, Richard Whiting, wrote a string of fine pop numbers in the twenties—will be in the Oak Room for a monthlong engagement beginning May 15. Ms. Whiting's biggest hit, "A Tree in a Meadow," appeared back in 1948, but her voice doesn't sound much worse for wear since the day Johnny Mercer told her, "You sing like a trumpet." Her shows continue to be funny, chatty, and uplifting. Shows at nine-fifteen and eleven-fifteen Tuesdays through Saturdays. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—A glitzy, color-coördinated jazz house, designed for maximum seating efficiency, where blue-suspendered waitresses sweep by your table bearing shrimp cocktails, champagne, and other trappings of the good life. After the show, out-of-towners flock to the upstairs souvenir shop, where, at last check, Blue Note golf balls were still available. Singer **NANCY WILSON**, who has been known to roam freely among idioms, will be in residence May 22-27. Ms. Wilson, who recently released a new record, was discovered a couple of decades ago by Cannonball Adderley, and she can still be counted on to perform with a crackerjack crew of jazz musicians. When singer-composer **ANGELA BOFILL** was first heard from in the late seventies, she had so much promise and such a big, brash voice that no one seemed to know whether she'd lean toward jazz-fusion or Las Vegas. Since then, the singer, who grew up in Harlem and the West Bronx and who'll begin an engagement here on May 29, has sung nearly everything from Billie Holiday to Stevie Wonder. Music from nine. Dining.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—A big, pleasant room where they pack them in until someone says uncle. On May 24, a gaggle of songwriters—Mary Chapin Carpenter, Don Dixon, Fred Koller, and Ellen Shipley—try their hand at singing. **BETTY CARTER**, who comes in May 25-26, is a terrific scat and jazz singer who breathes new life into standards. A typical Carter song contains a range of emotions, from heavy-lidded low notes to airy, vibratoless passages that bring to mind Chet Baker's trumpet. As a performer, she's full of surprises and comic verve; the last time we saw her, she began one song with some improvised lyrics: "I recorded this tune in 1963 / So did Tony Bennett / Guess who made all the money?" Trumpeter **JON FADDIS** and his band are also on the bill. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at eight and eleven, and Fridays and Saturdays at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty.

Burgers, fries, and other things to make your heart beat faster.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A neighborhood bar where, if your neighbors coöperate, you can hear the beautiful, singular sound of musicians thinking. A trio consisting of **LARRY GALES, WALTER DAVIS, JR.,** and **BEN RILEY** will be here through May 26. Music from nine-forty-five. Dining.

Carlos I, 432 Sixth Ave., at 10th St. (982-3260)—A Caribbean restaurant-bar that serves banana flambé, Miss Hilda's Fish Fritters, and jazz. It has been around for more than twenty years, but it wasn't until 1985 that the owners added music to the menu. **JIMMY HAMILTON,** a gray-haired, bespectacled, sober-looking clarinettist, brings in his septet May 22-27. Mr. Hamilton spent the better part of his career as a soloist in the Ellington band, and as a leader his repertoire is still dominated by the Duke. Music from nine-thirty. Dining.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The pastel uptown spa known as the Café Carlyle is home to **BOBBY SHORT** Tuesdays through Saturdays at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in the Bemelmans Bar, **BARBARA CARROLL** presides at the piano from nine-forty-five Tuesdays through Saturdays.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—In the late seventies and early eighties, this dark cave (graffiti-covered walls, a battered pool table, rest rooms for the intrepid only) was the hub of a thriving punk-music scene. Local rock has since diminished, but while other clubs of the era have fizzled, CB's perseveres, and young hopefuls continue to fill the stage nightly. **STRANGE CAVE** checks in on May 22, and the **LUNACHICKS** perform on May 25. Music from nine-thirty Sundays through Thursdays and from ten-thirty Fridays and Saturdays.

Condon's, 117 E. 15th St. (254-0960)—In the shadow of the Zeckendorf Towers sits this low-ceilinged, stucco-walled grotto, whose intimate scale makes it a fine spot for jazz. The blues singer **JIMMY WITHERSPOON,** who's here with his trio May 22-27, interprets standards in his own way, injecting them with personal reminiscence and biting humor. When we saw him last year, he performed a Jimmy Reed shuffle, Peetie Wheatstraw's "Big Leg Woman," and his own "I Don't Gotta" ("I don't gotta take you to the dentist tomorrow / 'cause I'm knocking out your teeth tonight"). Music after ten.

SUBSCAPE

Those who descend into the subway from the ficus-tree-and-white-trellis-filled atrium of J. P. Morgan's new Kevin Roche-designed headquarters, at 60 Wall Street, will not leave all the pretty scenery upstairs. At the bottom of the escalator, along the curved tunnel leading to the raucous train platform, hangs a forty-one-foot-long low-relief bronze landscape—a part of the M.T.A.'s Arts for Transit program. It depicts a staircase whose treads seem to be covered with crushed leaves; then a vista of rolling hills and puffy clouds; and finally some giant boulders, as if Manhattan schist were bursting through. The colors are much more varied than what we expect from bronze: the rocks are nearly black, the hills are moss green, and the sky is swimming-pool blue. The sculptor, Harry Roseman, told us that he used about twenty different pigment-and-acid concoctions to create those shades. He also said that he loves watching harried businesspeople walk past the piece. "Even when they're riding up the escalator, away from it, they still stare at it," he said. "Their feet are on automatic pilot, moving toward the office, but their eyes don't want to go."

Delta 88, 332 Eighth Ave., at 26th St. (924-3499)—A pleasant hangout for white-collar trash, where you'll find cold Dixie beer, collard greens, and plenty of men who know how to wear a leather vest. As if that weren't enough, the place also features a truckload of sort-of-Southern items: a photo booth, a giant Amoco sign, an Evel Knievel lunchbox. Most nights, the buffet turns into a bandstand at nine.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—If submarines had jazz clubs, they might look like this basement haunt, which is reached by passing through a tight corridor where you half expect to bump into Admiral Nimitz. This is not the place for those with a fear of intimacy: at the front tables you can go eye to eye with your favorite performers, and no matter where you're seated there's not much room to practice your T'ai Chi. Violinist **NOEL POINTER,** who has played with Patti LaBelle, Diana Ross, and the Detroit Symphony, among others, will be here May 22-27. **JUDY NIEMACK**—a balladeer with a scat singer's soul, or vice versa—comes in May 29-30. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL,** the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—A busy bar-and-grill in the piano-bass district. The schedule: pianist **RUSS KASSOFF** and bassist **LINC MILLIMAN** May 22-26, and pianist **DON FRIEDMAN** and bassist **HARVIE SWARTZ** beginning May 29. **JEFF KEEZER** and **RAY DRUMMOND** are in action on Mondays. Music from about nine-thirty.

Knitting Factory, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—A second-floor music-and-performance space, where people come to ponder the meaning of harmolodics and the post-ness of postmodernism. The room is run by two amiable young guys from Wisconsin, whose views on such things as cover charges are enlightened. "The American way of life, as I see it, has always been the American way of death," **LYDIA LUNCH** told a reporter a while back. Ms. Lunch, who performs here on May 25, first dug her nails into the New York scene in the late seventies, as the singer and guitarist for a series of anarchic punk bands, most notably Teen-Age Jesus and the Jerks. Since then, she has concentrated on poetry, fiction, and performance art. Nihilism and unremitting pessimism have always been her guiding philosophies, but she has a sense of humor. "If what I write is literature, you'd better emphasize the litter," she said. Other highlights: pianist **GERI ALLEN** on May 24; guitarist **JEAN-PAUL BOURELLY** on May 26; and **DON BYRON'S** quartet on May 28. Music after nine.

Lone Star Roadhouse, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—A cheery, climate-controlled restaurant-and-bar featuring a load of snazzy Gibson guitars, some Washington Square-style portraits of folks like Bo Diddley and Dr. John, and funky French fry–potato chip hybrids. A bleary-eyed patron here was recently heard remarking, "I don't know about you people, but I'm feeling a lot of love in this room." **DR. JOHN,** a gravel-voiced singer-pianist who once lost a finger in a Louisiana barroom brawl, will be here May 24-25, and **BUCKWHEAT ZYDECO** comes in May 30-June 1. Music after nine. Dining.

Manny's Car Wash, 1558 Third Ave, at 87th St. (369-2583)—A recent addition to the little-heralded Upper East Side club scene. The schedule, in part: the Chris Carter Blues Band on May 24; the Robert Ross band May 25-26; Rob Ternan & Keep the Change on May 29; and the Legendary Blues Band beginning May 30.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—A mid-Manhattan pub for well-heeled gents and high-heeled ladies. **SID CAESAR AND IMOGENE COCA** are currently in residence, offering routines they made famous in Caesar's hit fifties TV series "Your Show of Shows," as well as new material. The engagement marks the fortieth anniversary of the début of "Your Show of Shows," whose writing staff included Woody Allen, Mel Brooks, Carl Reiner, and Neil Simon; according to Mr. Caesar, the reunion marks the passing of "a forty-year weekend." Dining. Closed Sundays.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A moondust-in-your-hair cabaret where a club soda costs about eight dollars. There are plenty of niceties if you're so inclined: an ear-popping express elevator in which you can mingle with the famous; tables scattered with plastic diamonds and sapphires; and rest-room attendants who hover near the sink asking, "Is the water too warm?" The **MC GUIRE SISTERS,** the Ohio trio who personified nineteen-fifties good clean fun, begin a residency on May 22. Their show should be a trip through the time tunnel: though their snappy outfits have brought them up to date, they haven't fiddled with the basic formula, and they serve up such oldies as "Sugartime" and "Something's Gotta Give" in nearly pristine condition. Shows from nine. Dining. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

Sounds of Brazil, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—This former luncheonette has a tropical motif—straw huts, bamboo, a fake palm tree, a mosaic of gourds—and perhaps the city's most international booking policy: Brazil, Africa, and the Caribbean are just a few of the places explored. **SUGAR MINOTT,** a Kingston reggae crooner best known for his soulful "lover's rock," will be on the premises May 23-24; the **BURNING FLAMES,** a calypso band, claim May 25; and **LOKETO** offers soukous music May 26-27. Music from nine Tuesdays through Thursdays, and from ten Fridays and Saturdays. Dining. Closed Sundays.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—An itinerary stop for the international jazz groupies who, on any given night, can be seen roaming the streets of the Village. Up front, there's a glass-enclosed sidewalk café; in back is a larger room, with a pressed-tin ceiling, red brick, and more pinewood than a ski lodge. Drummer and hard-bop kingpin **ART BLAKEY**—whose band, the **JAZZ MESSENGERS,** has long been one of jazz's most prestigious finishing schools—is at work through May 27. Pianist **MC COY TYNER,** who gives listeners a considerable bang for their buck, starts up with a trio on May 29. The electrified big band of the late Gil Evans, now under the direction of his son, the trumpeter Miles Evans, is in action on Mondays. Tee-off time is ten. Dining.

Sweetwaters, 170 Amsterdam Ave., at 67th St. (873-4100)—Pink carnations on the tables, shrimp creole on the menu, and a sunken dance floor with a "Saturday Night Fever" ball. The stage, dominated by a white grand piano, is usually given over to soul and R. & B. **HAROLD MELVIN & THE BLUE NOTES,** the Philadelphia pop-soul group, will be in charge May 25-26. In the seventies, when Teddy Pendergrass was the band's lead singer, they produced such hits as "If You Don't Know Me by Now" and "Wake Up Everybody." Shows begin at eight and ten.

Tramps, 45 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Located on a Chelsea block that's fast becoming an urban Disneyland (a pool hall, indoor miniature golf, a trendy all-night diner, Limelight around the corner), this roller-rink-size bar-and-restaurant is slicker than the original Tramps, but the emphasis on solid rock and blues remains. The popular, if overly polite, jazz-fusion outfit **SPYRO GYRA** will perform on May 25.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—This windowless, pie-shaped basement has an illustrious history that embraces everyone from Judy Holliday to Lenny Bruce, from Pete Seeger and Leadbelly to Miles Davis and Sonny Rollins. The décor is homey and a little faded, like an attic full of memorabilia, but the music is anything but stale. **BILL FRISELL,** a young guitarist whose quirky style is full of twists and turns, heads a quartet May 22-27; **DOROTHY DONEGAN,** a hard-swinging pianist who studied with Art Tatum, and who is known for her vaudevillian antics at the piano, begins work on May 29, with a trio. Mondays are reserved for the late Mel Lewis's big band. Music after ten.

Wonderland, 519 2nd Ave., at 29th St. (213-5098)—When you're hungry for the blues, or just plain hungry. Saxophonist **DAVID (FATHEAD) NEWMAN,** who joined Ray Charles' band in 1954 and stayed for a decade, will begin an engagement here May 29. Shows Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays at nine and eleven, and Fridays and Saturdays at nine, eleven, and one. Dining.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—A rarity among jazz clubs: somewhere you'd go to eat even if there were no music. The food is Italian, the atmosphere is pastels and soft lights, and the musicians, who set up in a room between the bar and the dining room, are first-rate. Guitarist **TAL FARLOW,** a sixty-something jazz legend who likes to retire every so often, will be here with bassist **GARY MAZZAROPPI** through May 26. Music from eight weeknights, and Sundays from seven.

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

THE COUPLE: *William Gilroy, co-owner of Lucky Strike, and Tess Clayton, waitress at Flamingo East.*

TIME ACQUAINTED: *Approximately two months, living together since the third day, engaged since the third week.*

THE WEDDING: *May 13, 1990, at 5 P.M.*

THE PLACE: *Nell's.*

ADMINISTERING THE WEDDING VOWS: *The poet Max Blagg.*

IN ATTENDANCE: *Three hundred or so of Lucky Strike, Flamingo East, and Nell's most favored patrons, along with members of the bride's immediate family.*

EXCERPTS FROM THE TEXT:

(*To the groom*) Do you take this woman? Do you take this woman, will you take this woman to the limit as far as you lovingly, legally, lawfully can? Will you be her man? . . . Do you promise that wheresoever she dwells with *you*, you will *make* it seem as luxurious as Mt. Olympus?

(*To the bride*) And do you, Tess, do you take this man, do you accept the whole package and all it contains, do you take this man, to love, honor, and, hey, once in a while even obey what he say? Do you agree . . . that like swans you will mate for life?

(*To the assemblage*) Well, he's so fine and she's so fine, and unto each other they are both so very fine, and we pray that in their lives the texture of everything will be most excellent, for richer, *for* poorer, *though we prefer richer.*

(*To the deliriously happy couple*) So that he may enfold your absence as if it were presence. And when you come back home, well, come *on*—shower down your love! Swing for her, *sing for her, just do anything for her.* Tell her she's the one. Bring her your love, Billy boy . . . because love is the heart of everything, and if this be true and none of it jive, then let the knot be tied and give me five!

THE FIRST SONG PLAYED BY THE D.J. AFTER THE NUPTIALS: Donna Summer's version of "State of Independence." Wouldn't you have been disappointed if it had been the "Bridal Chorus" from "Lohengrin"?

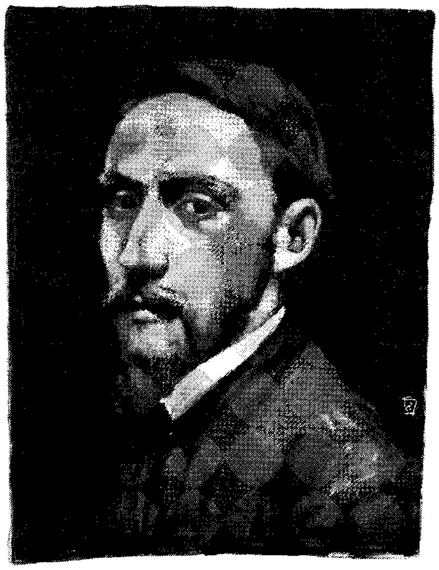
IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

"CHILDREN SCREAM"—A performance work by the Kumiko Kimoto Co., based on Jean Cocteau's novel "L'Enfant Terrible." (Performing Garage, 33 Wooster St. Starting May 24; performances run Tuesdays through Sundays at 8. For reservations, call 966-3651.)

LENINGRAD STATE MUSIC HALL—Presenting a Vegas-type show with dancers, trapeze artists, and dogs that do tricks. Performances start May 26 and will run through June 3. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. For ticket and schedule information, call 581-7907.)

"HALF A WORLD AWAY"—The composer A. Leroy and the artist Janie Geiser have created a performance work in which the audience visits a number of different rooms in no particular order. There's a little show (slides, puppets, songs) in every room. (Battery Maritime Building, South St. at Whitehall St., near the Staten Island Ferry Terminal. May 26-27 and June 2-3 at 2 and 4. For information about tickets, call 924-0077.)

BRENDA WONG AOKI—A dancer/storyteller from San Francisco. (Whitney Museum of American Art at Philip Morris, Park Ave. at 42nd St. May 30 at 7:30. No tickets necessary.)



Édouard Vuillard at the Brooklyn Museum

ART

WILLIAM WEGMAN—photographer, video poet, cartoonist, and *animalier* extraordinaire—has over the past five years or so become a serious painter as well. Wegman's progress in this slippery medium has not always been easy. Or, rather, it has in a sense been too easy—too smooth, too tentative, too light. He is perhaps best known as a master of whimsy, whose dog tableaux and dog one-acters, for instance, have a charm and an absurdist intelligence sometimes worthy of Beckett. But all too often whimsy turns into rank dippiness when mixed with paint. Apart from Paul Klee and a few odd Spaniards and Surrealists, not many artists have entirely managed this high-wire trick.

Wegman is by nature a lyrical poet. His earlier paintings, often based on a single motif, such as the image of a boat or plane found in a thrift-shop children's book—a postwar child's encyclopedia, for example—were plangent and sweet, but a little anemic. He moved along in the direction of an interesting ephemeral landscape genre—lovely, semi-abstract, aerial memory maps of Smalltown, U.S.A. These were quite wonderful, but they got fussy. In his recent paintings, on view at the Holly Solomon gallery (724 Fifth Avenue; through June 9), the promising strains have joined and strengthened. What they offer is a view of a very personal, atomic-nostalgic wasteland. As you enter the back room, expect to be thoroughly shaken—moved to the bone—by a group of last photo portraits of Wegman's immortal Man Ray. What you will see is an old weimaraner, out of costume this time and stripped of all obvious artifice, as King Lear.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"From Poussin to Matisse," a loan show from the Soviet Union, chronicles the Russian flair for collecting French artists. Fifty-one paintings are on view, including works by Watteau, David, Gauguin, and Cézanne. Through July 29. . . . ¶ No artist of this century could match Louis Comfort Tiffany's decorative creations in glass, bronze, and mosaic, but this show of lamps, chandeliers, windows, ceramics, and paintings does little more than confirm the razzle-dazzle taste of the marketplace: the emphasis is on the garish, gaudy extravaganzas—the Art Nouveau updates of Victorian bad taste. Still, there is a glorious "Dragonfly" chandelier in deepest blue and green, and a "Hydrangea" chandelier, whose sophisticated massing is articulated with magnificent coloration; these more humble masterworks still look fresh. . . . ¶ "Folon's Folons" is the self-explanatory title of a slim, simple show of works—fifty-odd watercolors, plus about a dozen found or transformed objects—made and owned by the well-known illustrator Jean-Michel Folon. Through June 3. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—Throughout this century, it has seemed that every kind of abstract painting, even the most radical, has been coöpted by commercial design. What a pleasure, then, to see an inversion of this formula in a small exhibition of fabric samples by Gunta Stölzl, the Bauhaus master weaver, and her student, the perhaps better-known Anni Albers. Through July 8. . . . ¶ Barbara Steinman is showing a site-specific installation incorporating photography and video. Through July 31. . . . ¶ "Photography Until Now," a show of nearly three hundred works, examines the technological, commercial, and creative developments that have shaped the medium over the past century and a half. Through May 29. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The museum is closed for renovation until Autumn, 1991.

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—"Signs of Love," a large-scale installation work by Ree Morton (1936–77) and the magnum opus of this pivotal and shamefully overlooked artist, looks as original and unsettling as it did when it was first exhibited in the Whitney's 1977 Biennial. With its painted and swagged ladders, frilly ribbons and flowers, and postage-stamp portraits of a fairy-tale prince and princess, it is an irreverent celebration of sentimentality. It exists in a realm somewhere between painting and sculpture, without caring about the conventions of either; it was created at a time when the austerity of minimalism still reigned. The work celebrates the brazen freedom of feminism, of an as yet unnamed postmodernist spirit, and of a community of artists whose decisions were based upon ideas and personal challenges, not on the desires of the market. Through July 22. . . . ¶ Half of the "New Sculpture 1965-75" show remains on view on the fourth floor. Through June 3. (Open Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, *Eastern Parkway*—"The Intimate Interiors of Édouard Vuillard" includes more than a hundred paintings and works on paper, all completed between 1890 and 1900. Through July 30. . . . ¶ The exhibition "Facing History," a pure example of art illustrating history, traces the image of blacks in American art from 1710 to 1940. The paintings, drawings, and occasional sculptures are best viewed from an iconographic point of view, and the purpose of the black man in John Singleton Copley's "Watson and the Shark," the best work on display, continues to be the source of heated disagreement. Through June 25. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 10 to 5.)

CHINA INSTITUTE, 125 E. 65th St.—"Clear as Crystal, Red as Flame" is an excellent primer on glassmaking in China from the fourteenth century through the early twentieth. Curiously, glass seems to be the only medium the Chinese used to mimic other materials. On view are vessels that look like porcelain, beads that approximate stones, and vases that ape celadon ware; the last have the lovely inner glow that can be achieved only with glass. Through June 16. (Open daily, except Sundays and Memorial Day, 10 to 5.)

COOPER-HEWITT MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—An examination of the Danish porcelain industry from 1760 to the present, including vases, figures, and original pieces from the first Flora Danica table service, on loan from the Danish Royal Family. . . . ¶ Fabrics designed by large textile companies or by individual artisans in the past decade are pre-

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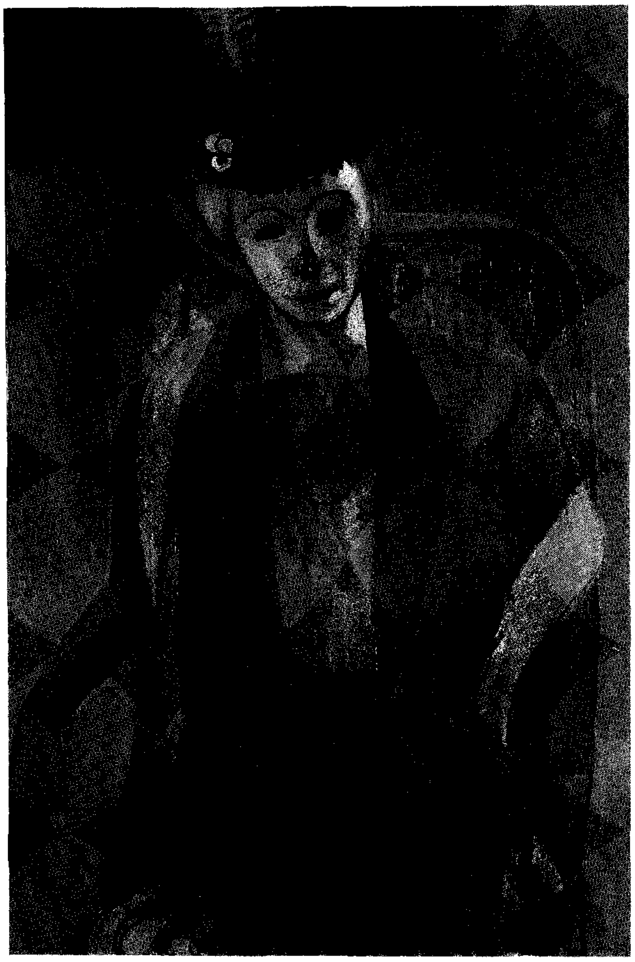


Henri Matisse, *Madame Matisse*

The 51 paintings in the exhibition reveal the passion for French painting that has been shared by virtually all the great Russian collectors, beginning with Catherine the Great.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

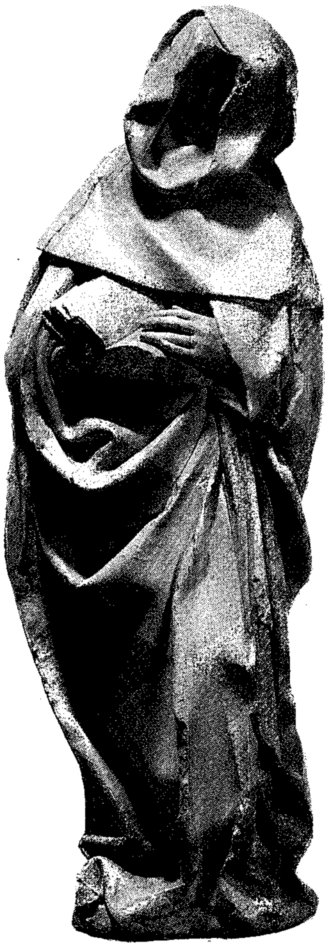
May 20–July 29, 1990

The Art Institute of Chicago

September 8–November 25, 1990

MEDIEVAL ART

From The Metropolitan Museum of Art and
The Art Institute of Chicago



Mourner from the Tomb of Jean de France, Duc de Berry,
Étienne Bobillet and Paul Mosselman, French, ca. 1453

These 82 precious objects, dating from the fifth through sixteenth centuries, represent outstanding examples from the major periods and disciplines of western medieval art and include many traditions unknown in the East.

Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow

May 10–July 10, 1990

The Hermitage, Leningrad

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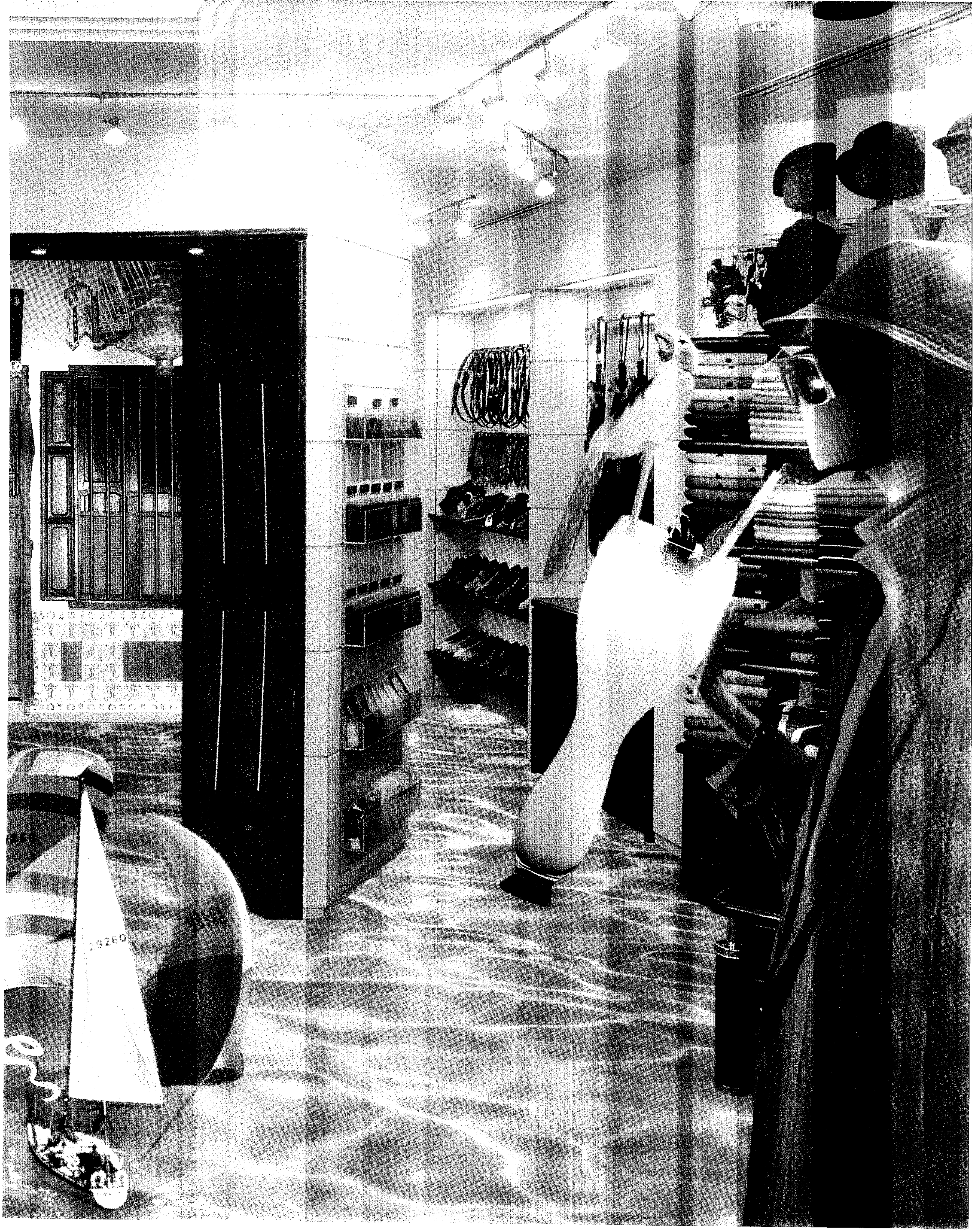

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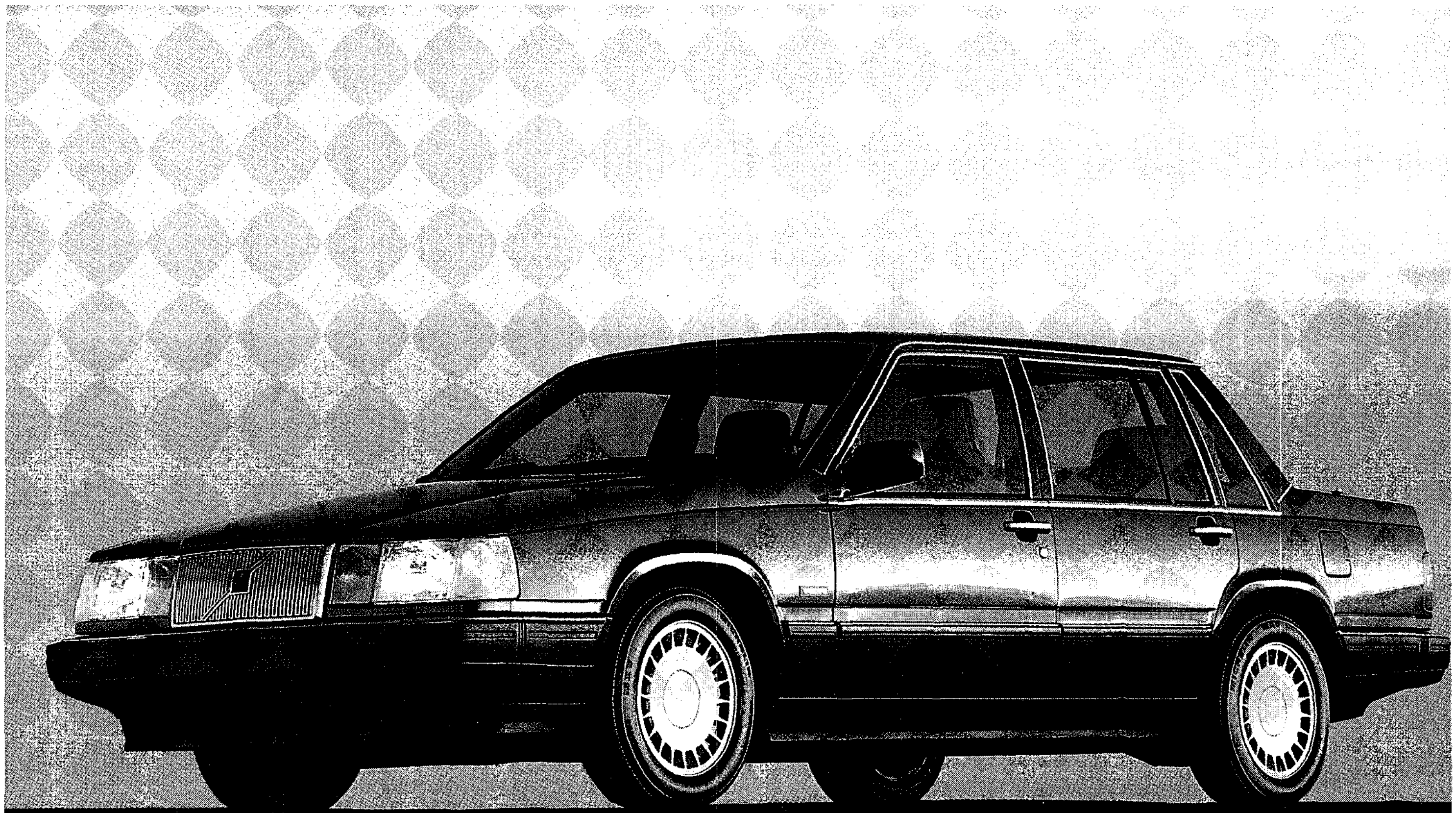

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sented on a grand scale—floor-to-ceiling lengths of cloth, for instance, and dramatic walk-through environments. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge from to 9; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St.—Writing boxes, tea caddies, and sake cups are among the forty pieces of Japanese lacquer ware on view. Through June 24. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 5.)

Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—"In the Court of the Sultan." In this comprehensive display on the life of the Sephardic Jews of the Ottoman Empire, most of the objects—even the ornate ones—are unspectacular. The period documented is from the mid-nineteenth century through the early twentieth, a time of decline for the Ottomans, of increased Western influence, and of growing intolerance toward Jews. From the velvet bedspreads that were remade into ark curtains to the ceremonial and everyday costumes (some decreed by law), the menorahs, and the furniture, a homey aesthetic dominates. But it is nonetheless a fascinating exhibition, one that effectively captures the spirit of daily life. Through June 28. (Open Mondays, Wednesdays, except May 30, and Thursdays, noon to 5; Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Sundays 11 to 6.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—Forty-five fifteenth-century Italian woodcut prints of saints, from the Biblioteca Classense, in Ravenna. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Museum of American Folk Art, Columbus Ave. between 65th and 66th Sts.—"When I am dead and all my bones are rotten/If this you see Remember me and never let me be forgotten," Margret Palfrey recorded on the sampler she wrought when she was thirteen years old, in 1739. Her wish comes true in the current show of a hundred and fifty-six samplers and silk embroideries made during the Colonial and Federal periods, when it was considered de rigueur for young girls to master such skills. The works are drawn from the encyclopedic collection of Betty Ring, who is also the curator. In the exhibition, Mrs. Ring celebrates the schoolmistresses who served as guiding lights to this country's youngest folk artists. Yet it is sometimes the errant pupil whose work is the most appealing to contemporary eyes. Sarah Eckstein's silk piece (1818), done at age ten, for example, centers on a large brick house so askew that the trees at each side appear to be holding it up. Through June 24. (Open daily, 9 to 9.)

Queens Museum, Flushing Meadow Park—Cynthia Carlson's engaging, playful, and smart show consists of re-creations of many of the site-specific installations she made throughout the eighties. There's an elusive, sombre quality to the work, an aspect amplified in the most recent pieces: an installation of curved-edge drawings of monumental tombstones that manages to be memorial rather than funereal, and an especially penetrating wall drawing with reliefs inspired by the makeshift shrines left at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, in Washington, D.C. Through May 27. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5:30.)

The Decade Show—A three-month collaborative event featuring work from the eighties in a plethora of genres: sculpture, painting, photography, video, performance art, and more. The exhibition runs concurrently at the **new museum,** 583 Broadway (open Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, noon to 8); the **museum of contemporary hispanic art,** 584 Broadway (open Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 5; Thursdays and Fridays, 11 to 8; Saturdays, 11 to 6); and the **studio museum in harlem,** 144 W. 125th St. (open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6). A free shuttle bus will run between Harlem and SoHo on each Saturday during the show.

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. They will be closed Memorial Day.)

Hans Arp (1886-1966)—Collages, wood reliefs, bronzes, marbles, watercolors, and drawings from the fifties and sixties by the important Dadaist. (Hans to some, Jean to others.) Through June 2. (Werner, 21 E. 67th St.)

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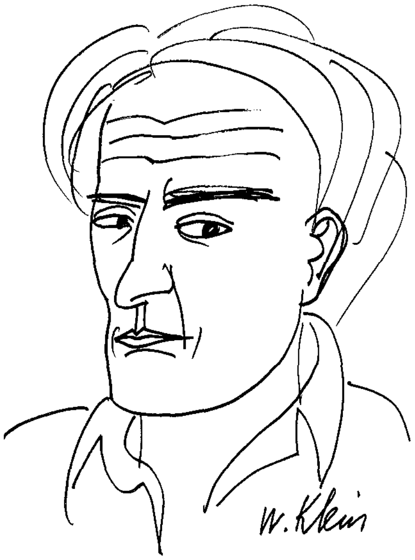

Self-portrait by photographer William Klein

Vasily Ermilov (1894-1968)—This pioneer of Constructivist art in the Ukraine lived the latter part of his life in obscurity, producing the accepted social-realist art by day and continuing in his modernist idiom on the sly at night. The current exhibition is extensive, including work from throughout his career, with an emphasis on small paintings on paper. There are also several refined but dull figurative studies, and a model and photodocuments of a major work, the quintessential Constructivist speaker's rostrum Ermilov designed in 1927 for the tenth anniversary of the October Revolution. Some of the most animated works are book designs from the twenties and thirties. Through June 8. (Hutton, 33 E. 74th St.)

Lyonel Feininger (1871-1956)—These small drawings, from 1908 to 1912 and never before exhibited, trace Feininger's transformation from cartoonist to artist. The touch lightens, the palette softens, the figures become elongated, and—poof!—before your very eyes, a minor master is born. Through June 16. (Moeller, 52 E. 76th St.)

Jackson Pollock (1912-56)—Eight large "black enamel paintings" and a group of works on paper, including notebook drawings, make up an exceptionally good show. Through June 2. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

Group Shows—At **acquavella,** 18 E. 79th St.: An exhibition of nineteenth- and twentieth-century paintings and sculptures. Most of the Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings here are substantial in size and subject but are nonetheless dull, the exceptions being a Bonnard of a woman bathing, two luscious windowed interiors by Matisse, and an extraordinary early Mondrian painting of a chrysanthemum. Through May 25. (Open Mondays.) . . . **cds gallery,** 13 E. 75th St.: Most of the works in this exhibition of Latin-American masters are very minor, but there is a fine small 1933 oil, with pictographs, by Torres-Garcia; a quintessential Rivera watercolor of a worker that displays great humanity; a charming Klee-like child's fantasy of ascending pyramids by Xul Solar; and a romantic portrait of a man in a Surrealistic landscape by Juan Battle-Planas that borrows heavily from Dali but also has its own style. Through May 31. (Open Mondays.) . . . **hirschl & adler,** 21 E. 70th St.: This display of eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and twentieth-century American art works and furniture, many of them museum quality, is a study in contrasts. There are, for example, two Marsden Hartley paintings of a bud in a vase, both from 1917, which are hung side by side. One is a tender Cubist painting; the other is in the artist's colorful, mystical style inspired by the German Expressionists. Through June 8.

Short List—**juan bordes,** Kouros, 23 E. 73rd St. (through May 26); **susan crile,** Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St. (through June 2); **odd nerdrum,** Hamilton, 19 E. 71st St. (through June 15); **antonio segui,** Bernard, 33 E. 74th St. (through June 29); **michael steiner,** Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. (open Mondays, through May 31).

GALLERIES—57th STREET AREA

Eugène Carrière (1849-1906)—An exquisite exhibition of twenty sepia-toned paintings by this underrated French Symbolist, whose work takes on new meaning in light of such contemporary artists as Mark Tansey, Troy Brauntuch, and Eric Fischl. Carrière's figures are enveloped in a rapturous haze of sorrow. The Pietà-like "Death of Gauguin" depicts one of the most tender embraces ever painted. A self-portrait looks like an atmospheric mirage, except for the artist's haunting eyes, rendered with swift dabs of black paint. Through June 30. (Kent, 41 E. 57th St.)

Enzo Cucchi—Some perfectly attractive drawings on bits of paper with crumpled edges, a few set into circular trays with mirrors. The artist, the most mysterious of the "three C's," has a very appealing touch, but this selection is woefully slim. Through June 2. (Prats, 24 W. 57th St.)

Gilbert & George—In contrast with the sometimes dark, sometimes melancholy tone of the British duo's photo works, these new pieces—kaleidoscopic arrangements of picture postcards, a type of material used in some of their earliest works—are bright and hopeful. Through June 2. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. . . . ¶ Hirschl & Adler Modern, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St., has a complementary show of earlier work.)

Bryan Hunt—Buoyant, enigmatic "airships," made of spruce and balsa frames covered with a silky synthetic fabric and mounted high on the wall. These objects are a further exploration of the artist's most successful form. Through May 26. (Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St.)

Anselm Kiefer—The controversy brewing around this young German artist is likely to continue with his latest paintings, which take on such large themes as the dissemination of evil and the violence of repression. They are grand and majestic, with smocklike garments—which beg a metaphoric link to concentration camps—and airplanes made of lead attached to their peeling surfaces. After Kiefer's elevation, which occurred in a few quick years and culminated in a recent Museum of Modern Art retrospective, the current question is whether the artist's work in fact embraces the same Teutonic vision he presumably mocked. Kiefer, however, keeps his viewpoint deliberately ambiguous, and it is this ambiguity, much more than the masterful pyrotechnics, that continues to haunt. Through June 16. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

John Torreano—In his most recent large plywood "canvases," the artist has combined partially embedded colored glass or wood balls and his signature plastic jewels with a more pictorial element: painted ellipses that have been carved in shallow relief. Although Torreano's interests never really change, his level of finesse keeps getting higher. Through June 2. (Shea & Beker, 20 W. 57th St.)

Short List—**pierre alechinsky,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. (through May 25), and Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St. (through June 1); **romare bearden,** ACA, 41 E. 57th St. (through June 16); **john bellany,** Ruth Siegel, 24 W. 57th St. (through June 16); **larry brown** and **mattie berhang,** Lamagna, 50 W. 57th St. (through May 26); **arnold friedman,** Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (open Mondays, through May 26); **ron gorchov,** Tilton, 24 W. 57th St. (through June 2); **robert gwathmey,** Dintenfass, 50 W. 57th St. (through June 15); **rené magritte,** Pace, 32 E. 57th St. (through June 30), and Pace-MacGill, 32 E.

57th St. (through June 29); **DAVID SAUNDERS,** Borgenicht, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through May 30); **PHILIP SMITH,** McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. (through June 2); **HUGH STEERS,** Midtown, 11 E. 57th St. (through June 1); **MARK TOBEY,** Daverio, 41 E. 57th St. (through June 16); **JOHN VAN ALSTINE,** Haime, 41 E. 57th St. (open Mondays, through June 9); **MARC VAUX,** Center for International Contemporary Arts, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through June 23); **TOM WESSELMANN,** Janis, 110 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through June 2), and O. K. Harris, 383 West Broadway (through May 26); **ADJA YUNKERS,** Associated American Artists, 20 W. 57th St. (through June 1).

GALLERIES—SoHo

Jessica Diamond—An exhibition, mostly of wall paintings, that conjures the now defunct alternative scene. The works are uneven but spirited, the best being a painted network of dollar signs so densely packed they look like barbed wire. There are also some homespun sculptures, including a rickety metal top hat with the names of repressive world leaders pressed into it in the manner of an autograph album. Through June 2. (American Fine Arts, 40 Wooster St.)

TUNING IN

The tour of the Steinway piano factory is not for the faint of heart. To take it, you must make a reservation (1-718 721-2600), show up at One Steinway Place, in Queens, at nine o'clock on a Friday morning, sign a release, don protective eyewear, and for two and a half hours listen to questions like "Why did Steinway stop using Teflon bushers?"

That said, the tour is part history lecture (the factory's been in operation since 1870 and it manufactures about two thousand pianos a year), part piano-industry tell-all (where can a nice company find affordable spruce?), and part shop class ("There's one small piece of metal I've neglected to mention," a guide said recently, though that seemed unlikely). The expedition is roughly chronological; you follow the piano-making process from the lumberyard to the tuning rooms. You peek into wood-drying saunas; observe the making of a hand-carved Louis XV-style piano; and occasionally listen to fond stories about customers like Paderewski, Ahmad Jamal, and Elton John. One of the highlights of the morning is a machine that breaks in new pianos by striking their keys, more or less simultaneously, ten thousand times. The machine produces a fascinating, unearthly rumble, and—as the guide admitted, endearingly sotto voce—Steinway didn't even want one until they found out how much Yamaha liked theirs.

Gunther Förg—Twelve geometric works in gorgeous, luminous colors—a juxtaposition of bottle green and orange, for example—that are a triumph of painting. Through May 26. (Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince St.)

April Gornik—This show of about a dozen large meteorological landscapes is the artist's strongest in many years. In these portraits of "pure" weather, Gornik controls the elements in a platonic, sometimes didactic manner. The paintings are exemplary in their lucidity—which is no small feat, given the scale of Gornik's endeavor. Yet she seems to be enamored of academicism itself, and perhaps for this reason her work is apt to leave one with a little lurking doubt: O.K. . . . I get the picture . . . but *now* what? Through May 26. (Thorp, 103 Prince St.)

Rodney Alan Greenblat—Paintings and constructions in the spirit of Pee-wee Herman—strictly kids' stuff. A large train set suggests that the artist could do a dynamite job of designing a miniature-golf course or an amusement park. Through May 25. (Gracie Mansion Gallery, 532 Broadway.)

Keith Haring (1958-90)—A selection of drawings from 1980 to 1982 that are not necessarily Haring's best, but show what he did best. The works still look as fresh as they did when they were made; their youthful candor is a bit haunting. Through June 2. (Shafrazi, 163 Mercer St.)

Nancy Haynes—In these new abstract paintings, the underrated Haynes picks up the minimalist strain where other artists' literalist paintings leave off, but with a post-minimalist's love of pushing paint around. Through June 2. (Good, 532 Broadway.)

Donald Judd—The current show features three of the artist's large, open-topped anodized-aluminum boxes, which are among his most awkward—and most mystifying—sculptures. All of them are about being looked down into, and inside each is a simple arrangement of aluminum or colored-Plexiglas planes. The most graphic is a particularly colorful three-dimensional De Stijl composition in orange, black, and electric blue. Through May 26. (Cooper, 155 Wooster St.)

Liz Larner—Good seventies-style installation art, with an S & M edge. The dominant piece is a succession of receding rectangles, drawn in space with heavy metal chains and arranged in forced perspective. A small, nasty-looking corner piece resembles a section of a spiderweb made of metallic chicken bones with little leather seats. Through May 26. (303 Gallery, 89 Greene St.)

Rex Lau—Eight paintings with stormy brushwork depicting a pair of rocks atop conical pedestals with a hovering cloud. There's some fine paint-handling in these works, which follow admirably in the tradition of Ryder, Hartley, and Dove, but it's unclear what has been gained by the repetition of image. More challenging are a new group of paintings on paper with solid areas of color and an overlay of copper nails; they have an openness the earlier paintings seem to lack. Through June 2. (Walls, 137 Greene St.)

Patty Martori—There's a compelling, primal creepiness to these wall works and assembled sculptures, as if they were the recollections of an Addams-family childhood. A rectangle of smashed eggshells edged in red dye and embedded in one wall has all the otherworldly mystery of a mastaba. Adding to the mood are a strip of finely combed and crimped red hair, which runs along the top of a box cut into the wall, and mirrors that look like they've been dipped in red lacquer. Through June 2. (Hearn, 39 Wooster St.)

Aldo Mondino—The first New York exhibition of an oddball multimedia artist who has been on the fringe of the Arte Povera movement since the sixties. His preoccupation with Middle Eastern themes merges with a sharp anti-art irreverence to produce faux-ancient mosaics, made of sugar cubes, in the shape of Jewish symbols, a carpet of coffee beans entitled "Mecca Mokka," and several portraits in chocolate, including one of a ram's head entitled "Sacrificio." There's great humor to Mondino's irreverent handling of paint, as well. Portraits of the sultans—thirty-six of them—are a bit tired in their generic camp style, except for the great swirls of translucent paint in the sultans' turbans. A portrait of two praying rabbis, with its squiggly paint tallith tassels, is better. Through June 2. (Sperone Westwater, 121 Greene St.)

Robert Morris—A show centering on the most sensuous of the cagey artist's works. This is a fine installation, including some of the later (1978-84) felt pieces—sheets of heavy, industrial felt that have been slit, splayed open, and hung and draped from the wall with delicate folds, like kimonos. Through June 2. (Lang & O'Hara, 568 Broadway.)

Barnett Newman (1905-70)—Given the importance of grand scale to the renowned Abstract Expressionist's light-saturated paintings, it comes as a pleasant surprise that he was a fine printmaker as well. In this exhibition are all of Newman's printed works, including the eighteen lithographic "Cantos," some fascinating notational etchings from 1968, and a set of etchings more directly related to the signature painted zips. Through May 26. (Lorence-Monk, 568 Broadway.)

John Newman—Good old-fashioned drawings on a large scale. The colorful sketches for the artist's better-known sculptures indicate that the three-dimensional works are an intricately engineered phantasmagoria. With their notations, smudges, and multiple studies of forms—dissected and otherwise—they have everything one could want from drawings. Through May 26. (Nolan, 560 Broadway.)

Thomas Nozkowski—Small abstract paintings of the sort that seem born of an intense communion with canvas. They have a romanticized scientific aura and are very competent, but they are also emotionally stingy and a bit boring. Through June 9. (Protetch, 560 Broadway.)

Dennis Oppenheim—Oppenheim gets more whacked-out with every show. This one features sculptures of a wooden chair "pressing" itself against an upholstered one; flushing urinals covered in sprays of yellow paint; and three Raggedy Anns riding three Raggedy Andys. These virility-obsessed pieces are a scream. Through May 26. (Gibson, 568 Broadway.)

Laurie Parsons—The artist has chosen to empty out the main space of the Lorence-Monk gallery for her exhibition. This decision is not the radical gesture it would have been in decades past but the continuation of a tradition the artist gladly embraces. There is no printed information, and no other clue, to suggest that hers is a major attack on the marketplace. The space is gorgeous and in top form, the staff friendlier and more available than ever. It's worth a visit, if only to see how others react. Through May 31. (578 Broadway.)

Sigmar Polke—There's a tantalizing vaporousness to these new paintings, as if they were in the process of forming themselves. And in a sense they are: the silver bromide with which they are treated will cause the colors to darken somewhat over time. Polke can be a jokester, but, as the current work indicates, he is also one of the best pure painters around. One greenish-yellow painting looks like distant explosions or a light rain of Rothkoesque atmosphere. Although not all of the pieces here work, the majority offer a rich and distilled aesthetic experience. Through May 26. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)

Susan Rothenberg—These are the artist's toughest paintings in years. Rothenberg has chosen to work with the ugliest, muddiest colors imaginable, and most of the nimble figures are loaded with scatological associations. When Rothenberg's subject is painting and the relationships depicted are those between figure and ground—as is the case with most of the work here—the artist can be fiery and intoxicating. Through May 26. (Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St.)

Julian Schnabel—The Pace gallery opens its new downtown outlet, in what had been Leo Castelli's Greene Street space, with the season's most ambitious exhibition, a Julian Schnabel Production of massive-scale sculptures, all in bronze. The walls are lined with nonfigurative "Tomb Panels," which are so resonant with emotion that they could be a postmodern version of the Medicis' final resting place. Schnabel takes on all sorts of big-league sculpture, most notably that of the Church and the classical world, which he enriches with touches of Mad Max's Thunderdome. There's a funny piece called "Barbara Bush Skipping Down the Champs Élysées," and a history-of-art sculpture consisting of a Beuysian table with Indian dolls, a primitive sculpture of the sort favored by the early modernists, and a hinge, all supported by inverted amphorae. Through June 29. (142 Greene St.)

Kiki Smith—Some of the most interesting traditionally figurative sculptures around—stuffed dresses on a proper red velvet bench, plasters of pregnant bellies, and a suspended shaped dress with glass feet—which center on themes of loss, procreation, and absence. The pieces have a healthy dose of autobiography without ever slipping into self-indulgence, and are emotionally both restrained and intense. Through June 14. (Fawbush, 568 Broadway.)

"American Masters of the 60s"—A power show in a new power space, similar in size and scale to a floor at the Whitney. Among the most resonant of these superb art works from the sixties, by all the expected blue-chip names, are those by Lichtenstein, Smith, Martin, Judd, Serra, Nauman, and Smithson. In most instances, older pieces are juxtaposed with more recent works by the same artists.

A silver "Liz" by Andy Warhol, for example, hangs opposite one of his "Last Supper" paintings. Both are superior works, and the dialogue between them succinctly tells part of Warhol's complex story. But many of the juxtapositions simply serve to remind us that these artists continue to produce good work. Through June 23. (Shafrazi, 130 Prince St.)

"The Work of Art in the Age of Perestroika"—This show of recent works from the Soviet Union has the kind of vibrant energy New York has not seen since the Mickey-and-Judy shows of Colab and the early East Village scene. The emphasis is on the younger generation, and, while the quality of the work is high, there is something unsettling about the circumstances: it is an art that has literally risen through the cracks as a form of creative resistance, but it has now been seized by an alien marketplace that consumes first and thinks later. There are works that are reminiscent of what has been produced here over the past fifteen years, but to read too much into those connections would be to miss entirely the vitality of this new crop of artists. Through June 30. (Kind, 136 Greene St.)

"The Power of Childhood"—The juxtaposition of children's art with grownups' demonstrates the primal impulses behind a variety of work by contemporary artists, ranging from the rantings of Jenny Holzer's texts, to the scratchy marks in Louisa Chase's paintings, to the simple figuration of Alex Katz's portraits. Despite its valiant attempt to add a new chapter to the outdated my-child-could-have-done-that vein of art criticism, this show could have accomplished more with the title alone; all that has been gained by including the work of children is to identify which artists are working in childlike ways and which are working in either false or simply childish ways. Through June 9. (Wessel O'Connor, 580 Broadway.)

Short List—**JEFF ADAMS,** Facchetti, 476 Broadway (through June 2); **DONALD BAECHLER,** Kasmin, 580 Broadway (through June 15); **BETSY BERNE,** Esman, 70 Greene St. (through June 2); **RICHARD BLOES,** Feature, 484 Broome St. (through June 9); **LOREN CALAWAY,** Viafora, 568 Broadway (through May 31); **PIER CONSAGRA,** Toll, 146 Greene St. (through June 16); **MEG CRANSTON,** Koury Wingate, 578 Broadway (through June 2); **ALAN DAVIE,** Gimpel, 415 West Broadway (through May 26); **JAN DIBBETS,** Castelli, 420 West Broadway (through May 26); **JOEL FISHER,** Cadot, 470 Broome St. (through May 31); **JULIO GALAN,** Nosei, 100 Prince St. (through June 16); **MICHAEL GREGORY,** Hoffman, 429 West Broadway (through May 30); **FEDERICO GUZMÁN,** Alexander, 59 Wooster St. (through May 26); **CHRISTOPHER HEWAT,** Munroe, 130 Prince St. (through June 9); **TOM HOLLAND,** Cowles, 420 West Broadway (through May 26); **ALFREDO JAAR,** Brown, 560 Broadway (through May 26); **RONALD JONES,** Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St. (through June 16); **ELLSWORTH KELLY,** 65 Thompson Street Gallery (through June 30); **SUSAN LAUFER,** Germans van Eck, 420 West Broadway (through June 2); **AL LOVING,** Kelly, 591 Broadway (through June 9); **WINIFRED LUTZ,** Pearl, 420 West Broadway (through June 30); **RICHARD MERKIN,** Helander, 415 West Broadway (through May 26); **ROSS NEHER,** Beitzel, 113 Greene St. (through June 2); **DONA NELSON,** Hanson, 415 West Broadway (through May 26); **CARL PALAZZOLO,** Lennon, Weinberg, 580 Broadway (through June 23); **GERARDO PITA,** Staempfli, 415 West Broadway (through June 8); **EDWIN SCHLOSSBERG,** Feldman, 31 Mercer St. (through June 9); **THEODOROS STAMOS,** Dorsky, 578 Broadway (through June 9); **JAMES TURRELL,** SteinGladstone, 99 Wooster St. (through May 31); **JAN VERCRUYSSE,** Burgin, 130 Prince St. (through June 2); **CECILIA VICUÑA,** Exit Art, 578 Broadway (through May 26); **ISAAC WITKIN,** 112 Greene Street Gallery (through May 26); **MICHAEL YOUNG,** Blum Helman Warehouse, 80 Greene St. (through May 26).

OTHER GALLERIES

Alice Neel (1900-84)—Like her paintings, Neel's etchings and lithographs never look exactly like their sitters, yet the portraits in this show capture a charged exchange between artist and subject that at times brings to mind a deer frozen by a pair of headlights. Through May 31. (Sragow, 73 Spring St. Opens at 1.)

Short List—**JESÚS RAFAEL SOTO,** Humphrey, 37 E. 7th St. (through June 2); **WILLIAM STONE,** Cugliani, 508 Greenwich St., at Spring St. (through June 2).

PHOTOGRAPHY

We dropped by Ex Libris, at 160A East 70th Street, and, as always with this unusual establishment, were glad we paid a visit. Over the years, Ex Libris, a bookshop/gallery that specializes in publications and works on paper from the nineteen-twenties and thirties, has been an oasis for anyone interested in the reverberating visual inventions that came with Constructivism, Futurism, Dadaism, and other expressions of the period. At Ex Libris one can find and look at and touch all sorts of graphic and literary marvels—it's a place for scholars, collectors, and wanderers. The special projects that the shop presents are less ambitious now than they once were, but, as Michael Sheehe, Ex Libris's director, proudly says, "Designers still come here for a fix." It's no wonder, because on any trip here one is bound to come across visual experiments that demonstrate how risk can pay off.

At the moment, Ex Libris is featuring a small Futurist photography exhibition. It is fascinating to see how Futurism's energetic spirit is woven into these pictures. Of all the photographs here, one by Anton Bragaglia, an artist whose work is not well enough known, captures the mood of the day most succinctly. Two different portraits of Futurism's protagonist himself—F. T. Marinetti—have been joined together. The left half depicts his face at rest. The right half shows his face animated by either a scream or a laugh—it's hard to tell. Put together, these two half-portraits show a man in the process of change. And change was what fired up these artists, who seemed readier for the twenty-first century than we do now.

William Klein—Blown-up and marked-up strips of contact sheets containing sequences of shots. With a range of subjects, from runway models backstage to political demonstrations, Klein simultaneously shows us what goes into producing images and fills our eyes with the nitty-gritty of modern life. Through May 26. (Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Short List—**TINA BARNEY,** Borden, 560 Broadway (through May 25); **BILL BRANDT** and **GRAHAM NASH,** Lowinsky, 584 Broadway (through June 16); **BARBARA ESS,** Marcus, 578 Broadway (through May 26); **VICTOR FRIEDMAN,** Witkin, 415 West Broadway (opens at noon on Saturdays, through May 26); **FRANK MAJORE,** Baer, 270 Lafayette St. (through May 26); **EDWARD MAXEY,** Danziger, 415 West Broadway (through June 9); **LEE MILLER** (through June 10) and **MARION POST WOLCOTT** (through June 24). International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. (daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8); **DOUG AND MIKE STARN,** Stux, 155 Spring St. (through May 26).

MUSIC

New Yorkers know that spring here is not really a season of its own but a period of fitful irresolution between feels-like-winter and pretty-much-summer, with the odd spring day (perhaps five or six per annum) mixed in. In musical doings, one can identify spring by the sudden lull that commences with the end of the New York Philharmonic season, in May, and lifts with the openings of the summer festivals, in (mostly) June: this spring is not quite coördinated with the calendar's, but at least it has a fairly clear beginning and end. Erich Leinsdorf is here to anticipate the beginning with Schumann's "Spring Symphony" at the Philharmonic (starting Thursday, May 24), but we expect to spend our musical week picking over long-ago-learned piano pieces and catching up on records we've brought home but not had time to play. Either that or spring-cleaning our ears by doing nothing at all.

New York Philharmonic—Erich Leinsdorf conducts a program that features music by Schumann Bizet, and Richard Strauss. (Avery Fisher Hall. 874-2424. May 24-26 and May 29 at 8.)

"*Vivaldi's Venice*"

Los Angeles Philharmonic—André Previn conducts works by Rachmaninoff and John Harbison. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. May 22 at 8.)

"La Dori"—The Mannes Camerata performs a staged version of Antonio Cesti's seventeenth-century opera. (Mannes College of Music, 150 W. 85th St. 580-0210. May 22 at 8, May 26 at 8, and May 27 at 6.)

New York Woodwind Quintet—Performing with the Orion String Quartet, in a transcription of Bach's "Art of the Fugue." (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. May 23 at 8.)

"Vivaldi's Venice"—Dino Anagnost leads the Little Orchestra Society and guest singers in the second concert of a five-year festival. (Holy Trinity Cathedral, 319 E. 74th St. May 23 at 8. For information about tickets, call 704-2100.)

Classical Quartet—With Julianne Baird, soprano, and Steven Lubin, fortepiano. Performing an all-Beethoven program on original instruments. (St. Michael's Church, Amsterdam Ave. at 99th St. May 25 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Judith Gordon—Piano. Performing works by Chopin and Liszt. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. May 26 at 2:30.)

Manhattan Chamber Orchestra—John Rutter conducts a program of his own works. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. May 26 at 8.)

Manhattan Philharmonic—Peter Tiboris and guest conductors lead a program of Brahms' Requiem and contemporary pieces. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. May 28 at 8.)

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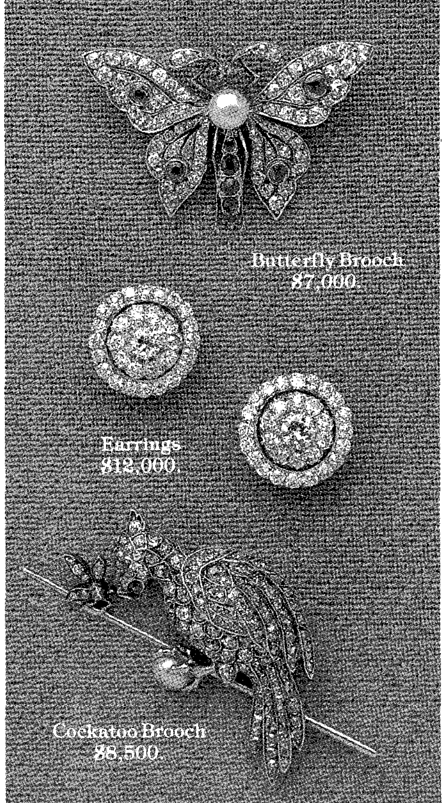

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JAZZ/POP/ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

Anita Baker—When this hugely popular singer of love songs and ballads wraps her caramel-coated tonsils around a tune, lights are dimmed, champagne bottles are crunched down into ice buckets, and her records sell like mad. (Her 1986 album, "Rapture," sold more than four million copies.) Although her last album was titled "Giving You the Best That I Got," its rationale was more accurately described by Baker in an interview: "This album was about giving my audience more of what they had become accustomed to." It sold three million copies in less than two months; sometimes you can't be too palatable. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. May 22-23 and May 25-26 at 8.)

Midnight Oil—The popularity of Midnight Oil might seem surprising, given the overwhelming enthusiasm they have shown for both environmental and racial issues. But this Australian band, whose lyrics are peppered with local references, deliver their worthy campaigns with addictive choruses. The lead singer—tall (six feet five), bald Peter Garrett—is a violent, frightening performer who dances up a storm. The rest of the band, particularly the drummer, Rob Hirst (who's responsible for most of the group's propulsive sound), encourages Garrett and the audience with grand, Technicolor music. The Oils hit hard, and their tough, tuneful show is full of fire. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. May 29-30 at 8.)

Computer-Music Concert—Robert Dick, Paul Lansky, Barton McLean, Neil B. Rolnick, and Bernadette Speach. (Dia Art Foundation, 155 Mercer St. May 22 at 8:30. Tickets at the door on the night of the performance.)

Richie Beirach and Dave Liebman—Greenwich House, 27 Barrow St. May 22-23 at 8. For tickets, call 307-7171.

Najee—With Randy Crawford and Alex Bugnon. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. May 25 at 8.)

Soweto Teachers Choir—A fifty-member group. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. May 25 at 8.)

Blues Revue—With Johnny Copeland, Cilla & the Rhythm Kings, and others. (Symphony Space. May 26 at 8.)

La Mama—The third annual new-music festival, which runs through June 10. At the Club at La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. May 21 at 8: The Conrad Cummings Ensemble. . . . May 23 at 10: Ben Neill and David First. . . . May 24-25 at 10: Dan Froot. . . . May 26-27 at 10: Linda Fisher and Joshua Fried. . . . May 28 at 8: Vito Ricci, Tom Laverack, and Larry Fessenden. (For information about tickets, call 475-7710.) . . . ¶ At La Galleria, 6 E. 1st St. May 23 and May 26 at 8, and May 27 at 4: James Cuomo. . . . May 24 at 8: Elodie Lauten. . . . May 25 at 8: Walter Thompson, Ellen Christi, Herb Robertson, and others. (No tickets necessary for the concerts at La Galleria.)

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Mets—Vs. the San Diego Padres, May 24-25 at 7:35, May 26 at 7:05, and May 27 at 1:35.

Yankees—Vs. the Chicago White Sox, May 21-22 at 7:30.

(The Mets play at Shea Stadium, 1-718 507-8499; and the Yankees play at Yankee Stadium, 293-6000.)

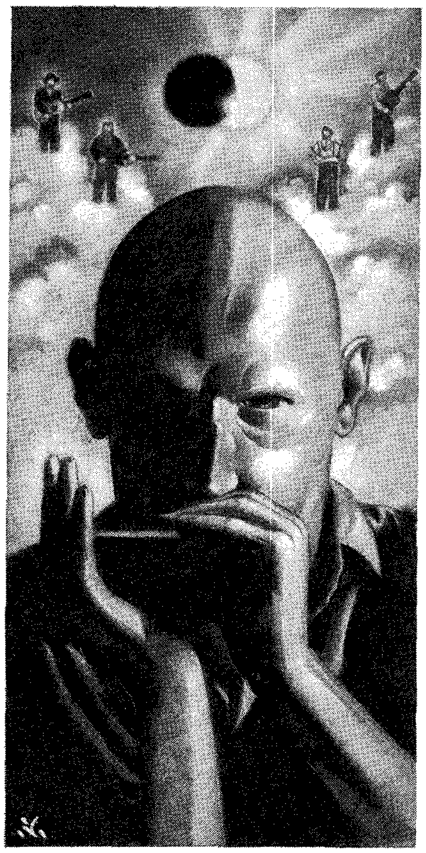
RACING

Horses—At Belmont: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 1. . . . **trotting** at Yonkers: Weeknights at 8 and Tuesdays at 1. . . . ¶ At the Meadowlands: Weeknights at 7:30.

Women—The L'Eggs Mini Marathon, a ten-kilometre road race in Central Park, starts at 9:30 on May 26 at Tavern on the Green.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Wooden Boat Show—Before airplanes, boats brought New Yorkers everything they needed (and wanted). And before goods arrived on tankers and cruisers and fibreglass yachts, they came by skiff, canoe, sloop, and yawl. On May 26-28, a fleet of old and new wooden boats will be docked at the South Street Seaport, and their sailors and builders will demonstrate knot-tying, steam-bending techniques, and other nautical skills. A free outdoor concert will cap each day's events: May 26 at 6:30, Maria Muldaur and David Bromberg; May 27 at 8, Loup Garou, Luka Bloom, and a fireworks display; and May 28 at 6:30, Laura Nyro and Livingston Taylor.



Peter Garrett of Midnight Oil

National Tap Dance Day—Mayor Dinkins has officially proclaimed May 25 a big tap jam, and it will be held in City Hall Park, at noon, with performances by the American Tap Dance Orchestra and Manhattan Tap.

Outdoors—May 26, starting at 7 A.M.: "The Great Saunter," a yearly thirty-two-mile walk around the perimeter of Manhattan. Meets at Fulton and Water Streets (rain date, May 27). . . . ¶ May 28 at 9:45: The Hungry Pedalers, the cyclists who like to eat out, are leading a twenty-five-mile mystery tour on Memorial Day. Meets at the Maine Monument, at Columbus Circle.

Film—"Joseph Brodsky: A Maddening Space" is a full-length film profile of the poet. Narrated by Jason Robards. (West Side Y, 5 W. 63rd St. 787-6557. May 23 at 8.)

Readings—May 21 at 8: Kathryn Walker and Paul Schmidt read from the poems, essays, and letters of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 645-5848.) . . . ¶ May 22 at 8: William Trevor and Edna O'Brien read from their own prose, in the last evening of the "Irish Literature" series. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 415-5440.) . . . ¶ May 23 at 6:30: Jonathan Hadary, Terry Donnelly, and Jack Davidson read stories by Daniel Menaker, Mary Lavin, and Mark Helprin. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400.) . . . ¶ May 25 at 7:30: Lydia Davis, Sonia Sanchez, and six elementary-school children read from their own stories and poetry. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. No tickets necessary.)

Talks—May 21 at 7:30: A. R. Gurney, David Henry Hwang, Wendy Wasserstein, and Peter Zeisler talk about playwriting. (Marymount Manhattan Theatre, 221 E. 71st St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ May 23 at 8: John Frohnmayer, chairman of the N.E.A., gives a lecture entitled "Funding, Censorship, and the Arts." (Vanderbilt Hall, New York University, 40 Washington Sq. S., at Macdougal St. No tickets necessary.)

Memoranda—The New York Armory Antiques Show, at the 7th Regiment Armory, runs from May 23 to May 27. . . . ¶ Memorial Day is observed on May 28.

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 23.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "Bail Jumper" (directed by Christian Faber).
Theatre 2: "The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover" (†).
Theatre 3: "Longtime Companion" (†).
Theatre 4: "Last Exit to Brooklyn" (Uli Edel), with Stephen Lang and Jennifer Jason Leigh.
Theatre 5: "The Hunt for Red October" (John McTiernan), with Sean Connery, Alec Baldwin, Scott Glenn, Sam Neill, James Earl Jones, Joss Ackland, and Richard Jordan.
Theatre 6: The 22nd International Tournée of Animation.

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
Through May 24: (Separate admissions) "Silence=Death" (Rosa von Praunheim), a documentary; "Positive" (von Praunheim), a documentary; and "Moderato Cantabile" (1960, Peter Brook), with Jeanne Moreau and Jean-Paul Belmondo.
From May 25: (Separate admissions) Five short films by Peter Greenaway; "A Zed and Two Noughts" (1986, Greenaway); and two films about Malcolm X.

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Q & A" (Sidney Lumet), with Nick Nolte, Timothy Hutton, and Armand Assante.
Theatre 2: "I Love You to Death" (†).
Theatre 3: "Wild Orchid" (Zalman King), with Mickey Rourke, Jacqueline Bisset, and Carré Otis.

Bijou Cinema, 3rd Ave. between 12th and 13th. (505-7320)
Through May 24: "Torn Apart" (Jack Fisher), with Adrian Pasdar and Cecilia Peck.
From May 25: To be announced.

Loews 19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "I Love You to Death" (†).
Theatre 2: "Q & A" (Sidney Lumet), with Nick Nolte, Timothy Hutton, and Armand Assante.
Theatre 3: Through May 24: "Tales from the Darkside: The Movie" (John Harrison). From May 25: "Fire Birds" (David Green), with Nicolas Cage, Tommy Lee Jones, and Sean Young.
Theatre 4: "Miami Blues" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Hunt for Red October" (John McTiernan), with Sean Connery, Alec Baldwin, Scott Glenn, Sam Neill, James Earl Jones, Joss Ackland, and Richard Jordan.
Theatre 6: "Cadillac Man" (Roger Donaldson), with Robin Williams and Tim Robbins.

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"Pretty Woman" (†).

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"Bird on a Wire" (John Badham), with Mel Gibson and Goldie Hawn.

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Miami Blues" (†).
Theatre 2: "Tales from the Darkside: The Movie" (John Harrison).
Theatre 3: "Cadillac Man" (Roger Donaldson), with Robin Williams and Tim Robbins.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
Through May 24: "The Guardian" (William Friedkin), with Carey Lowell, Dwier Brown, and Jenny Seagrove.
From May 25: "Back to the Future Part III" (Robert Zemeckis), with Michael J. Fox, Christopher Lloyd, and Mary Steenburgen.

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Torn Apart" (Jack Fisher), with Adrian Pasdar and Cecilia Peck.

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Short Time" (Gregg Champion), with Dabney Coleman, Matt Frewer, and Teri Garr.

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Strapless" (David Hare), with Blair Brown, Bruno Ganz, and Bridget Fonda.

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Miami Blues" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Hunt for Red October" (John McTiernan), with Sean Connery, Alec Baldwin, Scott Glenn, Sam Neill, James Earl Jones, Joss Ackland, and Richard Jordan.

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover" (†).

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: Through May 24: "Last Exit to Brooklyn" (Uli Edel), with Stephen Lang and Jennifer Jason Leigh. From May 25: "Back to the Future Part III" (Robert Zemeckis), with Michael J. Fox and Christopher Lloyd.
Theatre 2: Through May 24: "Wild Orchid" (Zalman King), with Mickey Rourke, Jacqueline Bisset, and Carré Otis. From May 25: "Back to the Future Part III."

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "Pretty Woman" (†).
Theatre 2: Through May 24: "Without You I'm Nothing" (John Boskovich), with Sandra Bernhard. From May 25: "Fire Birds" (David Green), with Nicolas Cage, Tommy Lee Jones, and Sean Young.
Theatre 3: "Mama, There's a Man in Your Bed" (Coline Serreau; in French), with Daniel Auteuil and Firmine Richard.

Gemini I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "I Love You to Death" (†).
Theatre 2: "Q & A" (Sidney Lumet), with Nick Nolte, Timothy Hutton, and Armand Assante.

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"Bird on a Wire" (John Badham), with Mel Gibson and Goldie Hawn.

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "Tales from the Darkside: The Movie" (John Harrison).
Theatre 2: "A Show of Force" (Bruno Barreto), with Amy Irving, Andy Garcia, Lou Diamond Phillips, and Robert Duvall.

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Monsieur Hire" (Patrice Leconte; in French), with Michel Blanc and Sandrine Bonnaire.

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Cadillac Man" (Rodger Donaldson), with Robin Williams, Tim Robbins, Pamela Reed, Fran Drescher, Annabella Sciorra, and Lori Petty.

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
Through May 24: "Class of 1999" (Mark L. Lester), with Bradley Gregg.
From May 25: "Back to the Future Part III" (Robert Zemeckis), with Michael J. Fox and Christopher Lloyd.

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "Tales from the Darkside: The Movie" (John Harrison).
Theatre 2: "The Guardian" (William Friedkin), with Carey Lowell, Dwier Brown, and Jenny Seagrove.

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: Through May 24: "Torn Apart" (Jack Fisher), with Adrian Pasdar and Cecilia Peck. From May 25: "Fire Birds" (David Green), with Nicolas Cage, Tommy Lee Jones, and Sean Young.
Theatre 2: "Pretty Woman" (†).

WEST SIDE

Bleecker Street Cinema I and 2, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560)
Theatre 1: "The Belly of an Architect" (1987, directed by Peter Greenaway).
Theatre 2: "Too Beautiful for You" (Bertrand Blier; in French), with Gérard Depardieu, Josiane Balasko, and Carole Bouquet.

Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Bird on a Wire" (John Badham), with Mel Gibson and Goldie Hawn.
Theatre 2: "Bird on a Wire."

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515)
"Pretty Woman" (†).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: Through May 24: "Tales from the Darkside: The Movie" (John Harrison). From May 25: "Back to the Future Part III" (Robert Zemeckis), with Michael J. Fox, Christopher Lloyd, and Mary Steenburgen.
Theatre 2: "Cadillac Man" (Roger Donaldson), with Robin Williams, Tim Robbins, Pamela Reed, Fran Drescher, Annabella Sciorra, and Lori Petty.

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "My Left Foot" (†).
Theatre 2: "Camille Claudel" (†).
Theatre 3: "Cinema Paradiso" (Giuseppe Tornatore; in Italian), with Philippe Noiret and Salvatore Cascio.
Theatre 4: "Without You I'm Nothing" (John Boskovich), with Sandra Bernhard.

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "Driving Miss Daisy" (†).
Theatre 2: "Strapless" (David Hare), with Blair Brown, Bruno Ganz, and Bridget Fonda.
Theatre 3: "Bird on a Wire" (John Badham), with Mel Gibson and Goldie Hawn.
Theatre 4: "Last Exit to Brooklyn" (Uli Edel), with Stephen Lang and Jennifer Jason Leigh.
Theatre 5: "The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover" (†).
Theatre 6: "The Gods Must Be Crazy II" (Jamie Uys).
Theatre 7: "Wild Orchid" (Zalman King), with Mickey Rourke, Jacqueline Bisset, and Carré Otis.
Theatre 8: Through May 24: "Bird on a Wire." From May 25: "Back to the Future Part III" (Robert Zemeckis), with Michael J. Fox, Christopher Lloyd, and Mary Steenburgen.
Theatre 9: "My Left Foot" (†).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "Short Time" (Gregg Champion), with Dabney Coleman, Matt Frewer, and Teri Garr.
Theatre 2: "The Guardian" (William Friedkin), with Carey Lowell, Dwier Brown, and Jenny Seagrove.
Theatre 3: "Class of 1999" (Mark L. Lester), with Bradley Gregg.

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
Through May 24: "Pathfinder" (Nils Gaup; in the Lapp language).
From May 25: "Pretty Woman" (†).

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "My Left Foot" (†).
Theatre 2: Through May 24: "Last Exit to Brooklyn" (Uli Edel), with Stephen Lang and Jennifer Jason Leigh. From May 25: "Back to the Future Part III" (Robert

At Thalia SoHo, Valerie Hobson and Conrad Veidt in "The Spy in Black"

Zemeckis), with Michael J. Fox and Christopher Lloyd.
Theatre 3: "Strapless" (David Hare), with Blair Brown, Bruno Ganz, and Bridget Fonda.
Theatre 4: "Wild Orchid" (Zalman King), with Mickey Rourke, Jacqueline Bisset, and Carré Otis.
Theatre 5: "The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover" (†).
Theatre 6: "Driving Miss Daisy" (†).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St. (765-7600)
"Bird on a Wire" (John Badham), with Mel Gibson and Goldie Hawn.

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
"My Left Foot" (†).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"The Mahabharata" (Peter Brook).

Carnegie Hall Cinema, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
"Longtime Companion" (†).

Carnegie Screening Room, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (757-2131)
"Too Beautiful for You" (Bertrand Blier; in French), with Gérard Depardieu, Josiane Balasko, and Carole Bouquet.

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (688-2013)
Through May 24: "Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown" (1988, Pedro Almodóvar; in Spanish), with Carmen Maura, Fernando Giullén, and Julieta Serrano.
From May 25: "Jesus of Montreal" (Denys Arcand; in French), with Lothaire Bluteau.

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Henry V" (†).

Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Cadillac Man" (Roger Donaldson), with Robin Williams, Tim Robbins, Pamela Reed, Fran Drescher, Annabella Sciorra, and Lori Petty.

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
Through May 24: "Last Exit to Brooklyn" (Uli Edel), with Stephen Lang and Jennifer Jason Leigh.
From May 25: "Back to the Future Part III" (Robert Zemeckis), with Michael J. Fox and Christopher Lloyd.

Lincoln Plaza 1, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!" (†).
Theatre 2: "Cinema Paradiso" (Giuseppe Tornatore; in Italian), with Philippe Noiret and Salvatore Cascio.
Theatre 3: "Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!" (†).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Bird on a Wire" (John Badham), with Mel Gibson and Goldie Hawn.

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" (†).
Theatre 2: Through May 24: "The Hunt for Red October" (John McTiernan), with Sean Connery, Alec Baldwin, Scott Glenn, Sam Neill, James Earl Jones, Joss Ackland, and Richard Jordan. From May 25: "Fire Birds" (David Green), with Nicolas Cage, Tommy Lee Jones, and Sean Young.
Theatre 3: "Pretty Woman" (†).
Theatre 4: "Q & A" (Sidney Lumet), with Nick Nolte, Timothy Hutton, and Armand Assante.
Theatre 5: "Tales from the Darkside: The Movie" (John Harrison).
Theatre 6: "Miami Blues" (†).

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: Through May 24: "Wild Orchid" (Zalman King), with Mickey Rourke, Jacqueline Bisset, and Carré Otis. From May 25: "Back to the Future Part III" (Robert Zemeckis), with Michael J. Fox and Christopher Lloyd.
Theatre 2: Through May 24: "The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover" (†). From May 25: "Back to the Future Part III."

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "Class of 1999" (Mark L. Lester), with Bradley Gregg.
Theatre 2: "The Guardian" (William Friedkin), with Carey Lowell, Dwier Brown, and Jenny Seagrove.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "House Party" (directed by Reginald Hudlin), with Christopher Reid and Christopher Martin.
Theatre 2: "Class of 1999" (Mark L. Lester), with Bradley Gregg.
Theatre 3: "I Love You to Death" (†).
Theatre 4: "Q & A" (Sidney Lumet), with Nick Nolte, Timothy Hutton, and Armand Assante.
Theatre 5: "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" (†).
Theatre 6: "Over Exposed."

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
Through May 24: "Pretty Woman" (†).
From May 25: "Fire Birds" (David Green), with Nicolas Cage, Tommy Lee Jones, and Sean Young.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 2: "The Hunt for Red October" (John McTiernan), with Sean Connery, Alec Baldwin, Scott Glenn, Sam Neill, James Earl Jones, and Richard Jordan.
Theatre 3: "The First Power" (Robert Resnikoff), with Lou Diamond Phillips and Tracy Griffith.
Theatre 4: "Miami Blues" (†).

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"Tales from the Darkside: The Movie" (John Harrison).

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: Through May 24: "Short Time" (Gregg Champion), with Dabney Coleman, Matt Frewer, and Teri Garr. From May 25: "Back to the Future Part III" (Robert Zemeckis), with Michael J. Fox and Christopher Lloyd.
Theatre 2: Through May 24: "The Guardian" (William Friedkin), with Carey Lowell, Dwier Brown, and Jenny Seagrove. From May 25: "Back to the Future Part III."

Warner, 7th Ave. between 42nd and 43rd. (764-6760)
"Wild Orchid" (Zalman King), with Mickey Rourke, Jacqueline Bisset, and Carré Otis.

West Side Cinema 1 and 2, 7th Ave. at 48th. (398-1720)
Theatre 1: (Separate admissions) "Hard to Kill" (Bruce Malmuth), with Steven Seagal; and "Impulse" (Sondra Locke), with Theresa Russell and Jeff Fahey.
Theatre 2: "Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer" (†).

REVIVAL HOUSES

Biograph Cinema, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)
"Going Places" (1974, directed by Bertrand Blier; in French), with Gérard Depardieu, Miou-Miou, and Patrick Dewaere.

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
Through May 22: "Breakfast at Tiffany's" (1961, Blake Edwards), with Audrey Hepburn, George Peppard, Patricia Neal, Buddy Ebsen, Martin Balsam, and Mickey Rooney; and "Funny Face" (1957, Stanley Donen), with Hepburn and Fred Astaire.
May 23-24: "The Rainbow" (1989, Ken Russell), with Sammi Davis; and "Women in Love" (1970, Ken Russell), with Alan Bates, Oliver Reed, Glenda Jackson, and Jennie Linden.
May 25-26: "Pink Floyd, The Wall" (1982, Alan Parker); and "Koyaanisqatsi" (1983, Godfrey Reggio).
May 27: "Kagemusha" (†); and "Sansho the Bailiff" (1954, Kenji Mizoguchi; in Japanese).
May 28-29: "The Bicycle Thief" (1949, Vittorio De Sica; in Italian); and "The Conformist" (1970, Bernardo Bertolucci; in Italian), with Jean-Louis Trintignant, Stefania Sandrelli, and Dominique Sanda.
From May 30: "Brazil" (†) and "The Gang's All Here" (†).

Thalia SoHo, 15 Vandam St. (675-0498)
Through May 22: "M" (1932, Fritz Lang; in German), with Peter Lorre; and "House by the River" (1950, Fritz Lang), with Louis Hayward, Jane Wyatt, and Lee Bowman.
May 23-24: "The Devil's Wanton" (1949, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish); and "Persona" (1967, Bergman; in Swedish), with Bibi Andersson and Liv Ullmann.
May 25-26: "Black Rain" (1989, Ridley Scott), with Michael Douglas; and "The Yakuza" (†).
May 27: "Summer" (†); and "Pauline at the Beach" (1982, Eric Rohmer; in French).
May 28-29: "Dark Journey" (1937, Victor Saville), with Conrad Veidt, Vivien Leigh, Robert Newton, and Joan Gardner; and "The Spy in Black" (1939, Michael Powell), with Veidt and Valerie Hobson.
From May 30: "Blue Velvet" (1986, David Lynch), with Kyle MacLachlan, Isabella Rossellini, Dennis Hopper, and Laura Dern; and "Colors" (1988, Hopper), with Sean Penn and Robert Duvall.

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
May 21: "The Earrings of Madame de . . ." (1953, Max Ophuls; in French), with Charles Boyer, Danielle Darrieux, and Vittorio De Sica; and "Le Plaisir" (1952, Max Ophuls; in French), with Claude Dauphin, Daniel Gélin, and Simone Simon.
May 22: "Whirlpool" (1950, Otto Preminger), with Gene Tierney, José Ferrer, and Richard Conte; and "Where the Sidewalk Ends" (1950, Preminger), with Tierney, Dana Andrews, and Gary Merril.
May 23: "The Threepenny Opera" (1931, G. W. Pabst; in German), with Lotte Lenya; and "The Blue Angel" (1929, Josef von Sternberg; in German), with Marlene Dietrich, Emil Jannings, and Hans Albers.
May 24: "The Bad and the Beautiful" (†); and "Undercurrent" (1946, Vincente Minnelli), with Robert Taylor, Katharine Hepburn, Robert Mitchum, and Edmund Gwenn.
May 25-26: "Beauty and the Beast" (†); and "Black Orpheus" (1959, Marcel Camus; a Brazilian film, in Portuguese), with Marpessa Dawn.
May 27: "Pandora's Box" (1928) and "Diary of a Lost Girl" (1929), both German silent films, directed by G. W. Pabst, with Louise Brooks.
May 28: "Masculine Feminine" (1965, Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Jean-Pierre Léaud and Chantal Goya; and "A Married Woman" (1965, Godard; in French), with Macha Meril.
May 29: "Libeled Lady" (1936, Jack Conway), with Jean Harlow, William Powell, Myrna Loy, and Spencer Tracy; and "Love Crazy" (1941, Conway), with Myrna Loy and William Powell.
May 30: "My Favorite Wife" (1940, Garson

Julia Roberts and Richard Gere in "Pretty Woman"

Kanin), with Irene Dunne, Cary Grant, Gail Patrick, and Randolph Scott; and "Unfaithfully Yours" (1948, Preston Sturges), with Rex Harrison, Linda Darnell, Edgar Kennedy, Rudy Vallée, Kurt Kreuger, Barbara Lawrence, and Lionel Stander.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490)
Theatre 1: May 21 at 2:30 and May 22 at 6: "A Foolish Day" (1960, directed by Mauro Bolognini; in Italian), with Jean Sorel, Léa Massari, and Paolo Stoppa. . . . ¶ May 21 at 6: "The Canterbury Tales" (1972, Pier Paolo Pasolini), with Pasolini, Hugh Griffith, and Laura Betti. . . . ¶ May 24 at 2:30: "Pigsty" (1969, Pasolini; in Italian), with Pierre Clementi, Jean-Pierre Léaud, and Anne Wiazemsky. . . . ¶ May 24 at 6: "The Decameron" (1970, Pasolini; in Italian), with Franco Citti, Pasolini, and Silvana Mangano. . . . ¶ May 25 at 2:30: "The Canterbury Tales." . . . ¶ May 25 at 6: "Teorema" (1968, Pasolini; in Italian), with Mangano, Massimo Girotti, and Terence Stamp. . . . ¶ May 26 at 2: "Hawks and Sparrows" (1966, Pasolini; in Italian), with Totò and Ninetto Davoli. . . . ¶ May 26 at 5: Four comic episodes directed by Pasolini, all in Italian. . . . ¶ May 27 at 2: "Mamma Roma" (1962, Pasolini; in Italian), with Anna Magnani, Ettore Garofolo, and Citti. . . . ¶ May 27 at 5: "The Gospel According to St. Matthew" (1964, Pasolini; in Italian). . . . ¶ May 28 at 2: "Accattone!" (1961, Pasolini; in Italian), with Citti and Adriana Asti. . . . ¶ May 28 at 5: "Medea" (1970, Pasolini, in Italian), with Maria Callas, Laurent Terzieff, and Girotti. . . . ¶ May 29 at 2:30: "Oedipus Rex" (1967, Pasolini; in Italian), with Citti, Mangano, and Alida Valli. . . . ¶ May 29 at 6: "Love Meetings" (1964, Pasolini; in Italian), with Pasolini, Alberto Moravia, and Cesare Musati.
Theatre 2: May 21 at 6:30: A program of films by Betzy Bromberg, who will be present. . . . ¶ May 22 at 3: "Nostalgia" (1971, Hollis Frampton), "One Second in Montreal" (1969, Michael Snow), and "La Jetée" (1963, Chris Marker; in French). . . . ¶ May 22 at 6: "Les Années Declic" (1983, Raymond Depardon). . . . ¶ May 24 at 3 and 6: "Dance of Hope" (1989, Deborah Shaffer), a documentary. . . . ¶ May 25 at 3: "Lost Horizon" (1937, Frank Capra), with Ronald Colman, H. B. Warner, Thomas Mitchell, Sam Jaffe, and Jane Wyatt. . . . ¶ May 25 at 6: "Erotikon" (1917, Mauritz Stiller; with Swedish intertitles). . . . ¶ May 26 at 2:30: "The Old Law" (1923, A. E. Dupont; with German intertitles). . . . ¶ May 26 at 5: "Lost Horizon." . . . ¶ May 27 at 2:30: "The Last Indian Attack" (1917, Alcides Greca; with Spanish intertitles). . . . ¶ May 27 at 5: "The Village Shoemaker" (1923, Erkki Karu; with Finnish intertitles). . . . ¶ May 28 at 2:30: "Man of Gold" (1919, Sándor Korda; with German intertitles). . . . ¶ May 28 at 5: "The Rite of Spring" (1962, Manoel de Oliveira; in Portuguese). . . . ¶ May 29 at 3: "Erotikon." . . . ¶ May 29 at 6: "Back to God's Country" (1919, David M. Hartford; silent).

Museum of Broadcasting, 1 E. 53rd St. (752-7684)—"Laurence Olivier: The Television Legacy." May 22-26: "King Lear" (1983, Michael Elliott), with Olivier, Colin Blakely, John Hurt, Anna Calder-Marshall, and Diana Rigg. Showings Tuesday at 2 and 5, Wednesday through Friday at 2, and Saturday at 12:15. . . . May 29-30: "The Ebony Tower" (1984, Robert Knights), with Olivier, Roger Rees, and Greta Scacchi. Showings Tuesday at 3 and 6, Wednesday through Friday at 3, and Saturday at 1. . . . ¶ "The Reiner Moritz Collection." May 22-26: "Margot Fonteyn" (1989, Patricia Foy), a documentary. . . . From May 29: "Ballerina: The Great Roles" (1986, Derek Bailey), about Natalia Makarova. Showings Tuesday at 2 and 6:30 and Wednesday through Saturday at 2.

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—Films showing in either the Riklis Theatre or the Warner Communications Screening Room. A selection of programs shown on Indian television, most in Hindi. May 23 at 2:30: "In Which Annie Gives It Those Ones" (1988, Pradip Krishen). . . . May 24 at 2:30: "Picnic" (1989, Aparana Sen). . . . May 25 at 2:30: "Satyajit Ray Presents" (1986-88, Sandip Ray), three short stories. . . . May 26 at noon: "Masquerade" (1989, Aravindan). . . . May 26 at 2: "Malgudi Days" (1986, Shankar Nag). . . . May 26 at 4: "In Which Annie Gives It Those Ones." . . . May 27 at noon: "Deliverance" (1981, Satyajit Ray). . . . May 27 at 1:15: "Satyajit Ray Presents." . . . May 27 at 3: "Picnic." . . . May 27 at 4:15: "Rajani" (1985, Basu Chatterjee). . . . May 30 at 2:30: "Masquerade." . . . ¶ May 26 at 2: "What Happened to Rosa" (1920, Victor Schertzinger; silent), with Mabel Normand. . . . ¶ May 26 at 4: "The Extra Girl" (1923, F. Richard Jones; silent), Normand. . . . ¶ May 27 at 2: "The Eyes of Julia Deep" (1918, Lloyd Ingraham; silent), with Mary Miles Minter. . . . ¶ May 27 at 4: "A Cumberland Romance" (1920, Charles Maigne; silent), with Minter, Monte Blue, and John Bowers.

Anthology Film Archives, 32-34 Second Ave., at Second St. (477-2714)—Films showing in either the Jonas Mekas Theatre or the Maya Deren Theatre. May 23 at 7: "Film Portrait" (1971, Jerome Hill). . . . ¶ May 23 at 9: "Intolerance" (1916, D. W. Griffith; silent). . . . ¶ May 24-25 at 7: "Gloria" (1980, John Cassavetes), with Gena Rowlands. . . . ¶ May 24-25 at 7: "Letter to the Next Generation" (1990, James Klein). . . . ¶ May 24 at 8:30: Four films by Benet Rossell. . . . ¶ May 24-25 at 9: "Killing of a Chinese Bookie" (1978, Cassavetes), with Ben Gazzara. . . . ¶ May 25 at 8:30: Five films by or about Rossell. . . . ¶ May 30 at 9: "Rapt" (1934, Dimitri Kirsanoff).

Whitney Museum, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-3633)—May 22 at 1:30 and May 23 at noon: "History" (1970, Ernie Gehr) and "Nostalgia" (1971, Hollis Frampton). . . . ¶ May 22 at 3:30 and 6:30 and May 23 at 3: "Left Side/Right Side" (1972, Joan Jonas), "Exchange" (1973, Robert Morris), and "Going Around in Circles" (1973, Nancy Holt). . . . ¶ May 24-25 at noon: "Swamp" (1971, Robert Smithson and Nancy Holt), "Barn Rushes" (1971, Larry Gottheim), and "S:TREAM:S:S:ECTION:S:ECTION:S:S:ECTIONED" (1971, Paul Sharits). . . . ¶ May 24-25 at 3: "The Meaning of Various Photographs to Ed Henderson" (1973, John Baldessari), "Selected Works, Reel 4" (1972, William Wegman), and "Three Transitions" (1973, Peter Campus). . . . ¶ May 26 at noon and May 27 at 1: "Horizons" (1973, Larry Gottheim). . . . ¶ May 26-27 at 3: "Prisoner's Dilemma" (1974, Richard Serra). . . . ¶ May 29 at 1:30 and May 30 at noon: "Rameau's Nephew by Diderot (Thanx to Dennis Young) by Wilma Schoen" (1974, Michael Snow).

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—May 23 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Cousin, Cousine" (1975, Jean-Charles Tacchella; in French), with Marie-Christine Barrault, Victor Lanoux, Marie-France Pisier, and Guy Marchand. . . . ¶ May 30 at 12:30 and 6: "Orpheus" (1950, Jean Cocteau; in French), with Jean Marais, François Périer, Maria Casarès, and Édouard Dermit. . . . ¶ May 30 at 3:15 and 8:45: "The Testament of Orpheus" (1959, Cocteau; in French), with Cocteau, Dermit, Périer, and Casarès.

Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fifth Ave. at 81st. (879-5500)—May 26 at 4 and 6:30: "The Grapes of Wrath" (1940, John Ford), with Henry Fonda, Jane Darwell, and John Carradine.

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Terrence Rafferty.)

The Bad and the Beautiful (1952)—Early in the year, the great Hollywood Dunciad, "Singin' in the Rain," came out, and then came this spangled, overwrought piece of Hollywoodian self-analysis. The first was a satire, the second a satire in spite of itself—which recalls the fabled little old lady who said in the middle of "Quo Vadis?," "Look, there's a sweet little lion who hasn't got a Christian." "The Bad and the Beautiful," a glossy melodrama about a "bad" megalomaniac Hollywood producer (Kirk Douglas) and a "beautiful" alcoholic star (Lana Turner), is one of those movies that set out to explain what Hollywood is *really* like. It's a piquant example of what it purports to expose—luxurious exhibitionism—and the course of what is described as a "rat race" to success is the softest turf ever. The structure is all too reminiscent of "Citizen Kane," and there is the "Rosebud" of Douglas's ill-defined Oedipal confusion, but there are also flashy, entertaining scenes and incidents derived from a number of famous careers. And the director, Vincente Minnelli, has given the material a hysterical stylishness; the black-and-white cinematography (by Robert Surtees) is more than dramatic—it has temperament. With Dick Powell as an author; Gloria Grahame as his Southern wife; Walter Pidgeon as a studio head; Barry Sullivan as a director; Gilbert Roland as Gaucho, the actor; Elaine Stewart as a starlet; and Leo G. Carroll, Paul Stewart, and Vanessa Brown. —P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; May 24.)

Beauty and the Beast (1946)—Jean Cocteau's first full-length movie (he wrote and directed it) is perhaps the most sensuously elegant of all filmed fairy tales. As a child escapes from everyday family life to the magic of a storybook, so, in the film, Beauty's farm, with its Vermeer simplicity, fades in intensity as we are caught up in the Gustave Doré extravagance of the Beast's enchanted landscape. In Christian Bérard's makeup, Jean Marais is a magnificent Beast; Beauty's self-sacrifice to him holds no more horror than a satisfying romantic fantasy should have. The transformation of the Beast into Prince Charming is ambiguous—what we have gained cannot quite take the place of what we have lost. (When shown the film, Greta Garbo is reported to have said at the end, "Give me back my Beast.") The delicate Josette Day is, quite properly, Beauty. With Marcel André as the father, Michel Auclair as the brother, and Mila Parély as a sister. Alekan wrote the score, Bérard did the décor and costumes. In French—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; May 25-26.)

Brazil (1985)—Terry Gilliam, of the Monty Python troupe, presents a retro-futurist fantasy (like "A Clockwork Orange" or "Blade Runner")—a melancholy, joke-ridden view of the horribleness of where we are now and the worse horribleness of where we're heading. It's like a stoned, slapstick "1984," a nightmare comedy in which the comedy is just an aspect of the nightmarishness. The title refers to pop escapism of the past—what you can only dream about in the squalor and sporadic terrorist violence of an Anglo-American police state "somewhere in the twentieth century." Visually, it's an original, bravura piece of moviemaking, with a weirdly ingenious vertical quality: the camera always seems to be moving up and down, rarely across. You get the feeling that people live and work squashed at the bottom of hollow towers. The clothes, like the furnishings and the ancient TV sets and assorted gadgetry, suggest that nothing has been made or manufactured since the forties. It's a thrift-shop world of the future. The central character (Jonathan Pryce) is a lowly clerk, a drone; in pursuit of the girl (Kim Greist) he has glimpsed in his dreams, he runs afoul of the state apparatus, and there's a superrealistic inevitability about this. The episodes lack dramatic definition, just as the gags do; they all run together and blur. And the film is both torpid and frantic. Yet Gilliam's vision is an organic thing on the screen—and that's a considerable achievement. Pryce's dead-eyed performance is charmless, but Robert De Niro turns up in a cameo role as a prankster daredevil, a freedom fighter; chomping on a cigar and all revved up, he's the life of the party. And Katherine Helmond, as Pryce's mother, delivers an elegant, broad caricature of a woman obsessed with plastic surgery. Also with Michael Palin, Ian Holm, and Ian Richardson. The script is by Gilliam, Tom Stoppard, and Charles McKeown.—P.K. (Cinema Village; starting May 30.)

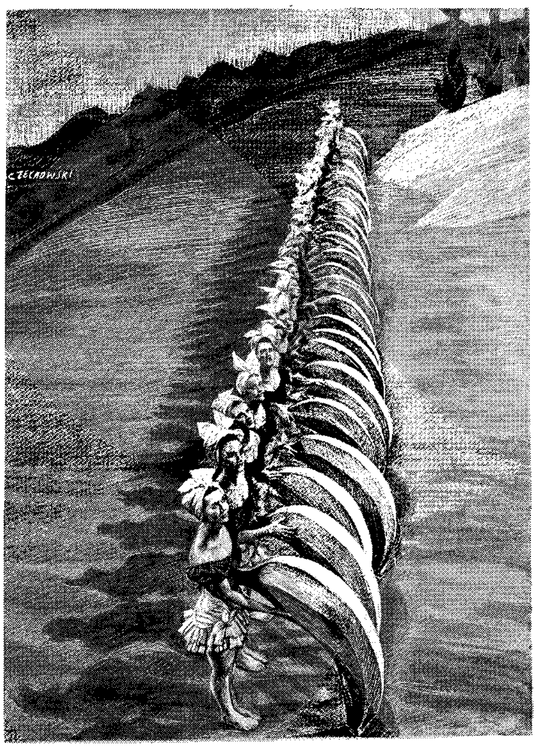
IN BRIEF—Cont'd

Camille Claudel—She lived, she loved, she sculpted, she went nuts. Bruno Nuytten's first film is a de-luxe biography of a nearly forgotten (but attractive!) artist who studied with the great Rodin, became his assistant and lover, and then struggled to break free of his influence and discover her own identity as a sculptor. Willful (and comely) as she is, Camille never manages to shake her obsession with Rodin, and she makes a mess of her life and her career. This is rich material, but the movie is a real chore to sit through: it's two and a half hours long, and the pace is sluggish. Nuytten, a superb cinematographer, doesn't seem to know how to tell a story—not one as complex as this, anyway. Isabelle Adjani plays Camille (there are obvious similarities to her role in "The Story of Adèle H.") with terrific abandon and intensity, yet the performance isn't satisfying; the film is so poorly shaped as drama that even her most striking moments seem to come out of nowhere. The script, by Nuytten and Marilyn Goldin, is based on a biography by Reine-Marie Paris. In French.—T.R. (Quad Cinema.)

The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover—A movie about a crude British thug, Albert Spica (Michael Gambon), whose favorite method of terrorizing people is ramming things down their throats. Albert himself eats only haute cuisine; he and his wife (Helen Mirren) dine every night at a posh restaurant called Le Hollandais. This is an Art Movie, refined and terribly formal; the director, Peter Greenaway (who also wrote the script), places this barbarian smack in the middle of "painterly" compositions and encourages us to see him as a steaming hunk of offal desecrating the beauty of an artist's creation. He looks at Albert with the disdainful stare that the pukka sahib directs at a servant who has inconvenienced him. Greenaway, however, has a lot more in common with his loutish protagonist than he thinks. He obviously regards himself as an aesthetic virtuoso, but he's just a cultural omnivore. (He chews with his mouth open—we can identify almost every piece of art that has fed his imagination.) The only thing in this movie's tidy, hermetic universe that Greenaway is unable to control, or disguise with fancy brushwork, is his loathing of the body. The movie features several gross-out scenes, including a climactic act of cannibalism; the Motion Picture Association of America gave it an X rating. (The distributors released it unrated.) What's offensive about the picture, though, isn't its violence or its visceral shocks but the patrician arrogance, the smug aestheticism, the snobbishness that suffuse every frame. Greenaway is an intellectual bully: he pushes us to the ground and kicks art in our faces. Also with Alan Howard (the Lover) and Richard Bohringer (the Cook).—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/7/90.) (Angelika Film Center, 59th Street East Cinema, Chelsea Cinemas, and Worldwide Cinemas. . . . ¶ Metro Cinema; through May 24.)

Driving Miss Daisy—Alfred Uhry's adaptation of his much honored play is still full of manipulative bits—it's virtually all manipulative bits—but the director, Bruce Beresford, understands how to work them while cutting down on their obviousness. Set in Atlanta, starting in 1948, the movie is the story of the companionship that develops between stubborn, suspicious Miss Daisy (Jessica Tandy), a wealthy Jewish widow of seventy-two, and her resilient chauffeur, Hoke (Morgan Freeman), a widower about a decade younger than she is. Essentially, it's about how he changes her. He's made upright, considerate, humane—he's made perfect—so that nothing will disturb our appreciation of the gentle, bittersweet reverie we're watching. But it's acted (and directed) eloquently. Tandy and Freeman achieve a beautiful equilibrium. And Dan Aykroyd comes through with a fine performance as Miss Daisy's good-old-boy son.—P.K. (12/25/89) (Chelsea Cinemas, and Worldwide Cinemas.)

The Gang's All Here (1943)—Busby Berkeley's own special brand of kaleidoscopic fantasy, turned into psychedelic surrealism by the electric reds and greens of 20th Century-Fox's color processing. Those who consider Berkeley a master consider this film his masterpiece. It is his maddest film: chorus girls dissolve into artichokes; there's a banana xylophone; and, for the song "The Lady in the Tutti-Frutti Hat," Carmen Miranda appears in platform shoes on an avenue of giant strawberries. Alice Faye sings the torch song "No Love, No Nothing," and also introduces the "Polka-Dot Polka" ballet, which, as a piece of staging, passes description. With Benny Goodman and his orchestra, and Charlotte Greenwood, James Ellison, Edward Everett Horton, Sheila Ryan, Eugene Pallette, and Phil Baker. The songs are by Leo Robin and Harry Warren, except that polka, which is David Raskin's. Screenplay by Walter Bullock, from a story concocted by three other fellows.—P.K. (Cinema Village; starting May 30.)



"The Gang's All Here"

Henry V—Adapted and directed by its young star, Kenneth Branagh, this fast-paced version isn't exultant, like the one made forty-five years earlier by Laurence Olivier. Branagh emphasizes the price paid for war: the bloodshed. And, in keeping with his generation's supposed disillusion with war, he minimizes the play's glorification of the English fighting man. His conception of how to film the play is to look closely at the conniving, the misgivings, the ego wars. (This epic noir doesn't indicate why the French lost at Agincourt.) Branagh is not an overnight great moviemaker; his attempts at spectacular effects strain his inventiveness. But as an actor he has something of James Cagney's confident Irishness; he's intensely likable, with a beautiful, expressive voice and a straightforwardness that drives the whole film ahead. He and the other performers are so up that you feel their pride in working on true dramatic poetry. It's a company of stars: Paul Scofield as the melancholy French king whose face foretells the doom of his army, Christopher Ravenscroft as the herald Mountjoy, Derek Jacobi as the Chorus, Judi Dench as Mistress Quickly, Robbie Coltrane as Falstaff, Brian Blessed as Exeter, Richard Briers as Bardolph, Richard Easton as the Constable of France, Alec McCowen as Ely, Robert Stephens as Pistol, Emma Thompson as Katherine, Geraldine McEwan as Alice, Christian Bale as Falstaff's boy, and, best of all, perhaps, Ian Holm as the chattering Welshman Fluellen.—P.K. (11/27/89) (Cinema 3.)

Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer—This low-budget independent feature, originally made for the home-video market, has a stark, relentless quality that is sometimes mistaken for art. Like Leonard Kastle's "The Honeymoon Killers" (1970), it's a deliberately flat, affectless treatment of gruesome true-crime material. (It's loosely based on the criminal career of a mass murderer named Henry Lee Lucas.) The movie's Henry (Michael Rooker) is a beefy, moronic-looking lug who lives in a miserable apartment with a creep named Otis (played, by Tom Towles, in a style that suggests a syphilitic Warren Oates) and Otis's sister, Becky (Tracy Arnold). Every now and then, Henry gets a sort of funny look in his eyes and goes out to kill somebody. Eventually, he starts taking Otis along, and Otis has a whale of a time; for a while, they videotape their exploits and watch them at home afterward. "Henry" plays like a hybrid of "Blood Feast" and "Stranger Than Paradise"; it mixes gore-movie carnage with Jarmusch-style aimless minimalism. Sure, it's compelling; the nature of the material guarantees that. But it doesn't seem to be telling us much more than that the world is a scary place and murder is ugly. We knew those things. This is tabloid chic. The screenplay is by John McNaughton and Richard Fire; McNaughton directed.—T.R. (4/23/90) (West Side Cinema.)

I Love You to Death—When Joey (Kevin Kline), the self-admiring pizzeria owner, walks down the street, his little rump is alert to everything. That's what gets him into trouble: he's surrounded by opportunities for seduction, and he's a practiced master of the art. Easing into conversation with a young beauty (Phoebe Cates) at a bar, he skillfully convinces her that the man she's with isn't worthy of her, and she apologizes for being with such a second-rate guy. You can't dislike the narcissistic Italian-American Joey; he's essentially innocent. That's why it takes so long for his loving wife (Tracey Ullman) to see what's going on. When her eyes are opened, she gives in to her hard-bitten Yugoslavian mother (Joan Plowright), who arranges to have Joey killed. Directed by Lawrence Kasdan, from John Kostmayer's script, this amiably slack screwball farce is based on an actual case in which five botched attempts were made on an errant husband's life. The picture is often on the verge of being really funny, but it doesn't have much energy, and it lacks comic precision until (near the end) the wildly gifted Miriam Margolyes, who plays Joey's mother, whacks him on his bandaged head; her explosive timing lifts the scene sky-high. Kevin Kline is a little too conscious of his deadpan style, but Keanu Reeves and William Hurt are a fine pair of dopeheads who hire on as hit men. (Reeves shows a flair for spaced-out clowning.) Plowright has a few near-inspired routines, and River Phoenix, playing a busboy, comes through as a giddy comedian. Watching the cast, you may feel tolerant, the way you do watching a bunch of boisterous pros enjoying themselves in a sloppy summer-stock production. Set in Tacoma, Washington.—P.K. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Loews 19th Street East 6, Gemini, and Criterion Center.)

Kagemusha (1980; "The Shadow Warrior")—Warfare is treated dispassionately in this epic film in color by Kurosawa, which is set during the wars of the clans in sixteenth-century Japan (the period just before the country was unified). Kurosawa seems to be saying that wisdom dictates caution, security, stasis, but that to be alive is to be subject to impulse, to chaos. The film's style is ceremonial rather than dramatic; it's not battle that Kurosawa is interested in here but formations in battle regalia. He appears to see war as a part of the turmoil of life, and he asks us simply to observe what he shows us. Perhaps he thinks that this way the horror will reach us at a deeper level. But he's also in love with the aesthetics of warfare—he's a schoolboy setting up armies of perfect soldiers and smiling at the patterns he has devised. These two sets of feelings may have neutralized Kagemusha—put it at a remove and made it somewhat abstract. The film seems fixated on mountains, triangles, and threes. Tatsuya Nakadai plays the warlord known as The Mountain, and he also plays the thieving peasant who has been condemned to death but whose life is spared so that he can serve as the lord's double. Written by Kurosawa and Masato Ide. In Japanese.—P.K. (Cinema Village; May 27.)

Longtime Companion—The screenwriter, Craig Lucas, and the director, Norman René, track the effects of AIDS on the lives of eight people: seven gay men and a straight woman who is a lifelong friend of one of the men. The filmmakers focus on one day in each year of the epidemic, from 1981 through 1989, and the mournful progress of the decade is expressed by the gaps between the annual episodes: the cast of characters keeps getting smaller, and at the end only the woman and three of the men are left. The movie is sometimes very effective, but it's often blander and more simplistic than it should be. It seems determined to convey a wholesome, "normal" image of gay life to straight America—so all its characters are pleasant and good-looking, and they're all white, too. The only really interesting characters are a middle-aged couple, David (Bruce Davison) and Sean (Mark Lamos). The natural protagonist of the drama is David, who, when Sean gets sick, cares for him with extraordinary patience and tenderness. Davison's performance (in probably the best role he has ever had) is wonderfully dry and precise. There's a strange reserve in his demeanor even when he's being goofy, so the strength he shows at the bedside of his dying lover is both heartbreaking and absolutely convincing. It's a well-written role, and Davison does a beautiful piece of acting. After he, too, disappears —between episodes—the movie seems to have lost the best part of itself. Also with Campbell Scott, Stephen Caffrey, Patrick Cassidy, Mary-Louise Parker, John Dossett, and Dermot Mulroney.—T.R. (5/21/90) (Angelika Film Center, and Carnegie Hall Cinema.)

Miami Blues—This is a pungent, blithely violent thriller—a B movie that doesn't aspire, or pretend, to be anything else. The director, George Armitage, works in a style so laconic and offhand that it could almost pass for nihilistic. It's just low-key professionalism, really, but that's a refreshing quality these days. Armitage knows how to keep the story moving and the action clear, how to find odd, amusing things in crummy locations, and how to stay out of the actors' way. And the actors shine. Alec Baldwin, playing a chipper young psychopath called Junior Frenger, gives a witty, volatile performance. Fred Ward—who is one of the film's producers—plays an amiable, denture-wearing police detective, Hoke Moseley; using an assortment of grins (some, alarmingly, chopperless) and dirty growls, he gives the character an admirable vitality. In the difficult role of Susie—a sweet-natured hooker who becomes Junior's girlfriend—Jennifer Jason Leigh is a delight; she has the intelligence and the originality to play the dumb, childish character with absolute gravity. The movie is nothing to get terribly excited about; in classic B-movie style, it's designed to go nowhere, fast. But it wears its craftiness and its essential no-goodness proudly, like a wiry ex-con with a "Born to Lose" tattoo.—T.R. (4/23/90) (Loews 19th Street East 6, Loews 34th Street Showplace, Manhattan Twin, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy.)

My Left Foot—The greatness of Daniel Day-Lewis's performance as the Dubliner Christy Brown, a victim of cerebral palsy who became a painter and a writer, is that he pulls you inside Christy's frustration and rage (and his bottomless thirst). There's nothing soft or maudlin about this movie's view of Christy: he's anguished and locked in, yet excitingly insolent. The movie may tear you apart, but it's the story of a triumphantly tough guy who lived it up, and Day-Lewis's interpretation has some of the sexual seductiveness that was so startling in Olivier's Richard III. This is the first film of the Irish playwright-director Jim Sheridan, who wrote the superb screenplay with another Irish playwright, Shane Connaughton. With Brenda Fricker, Ray McAnally, and Hugh O'Conor playing Christy as a child.—P.K. (10/2/89) (Quad Cinema, Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, and Festival.)

Pretty Woman—The lovers in this romantic comedy, directed by Garry Marshall, are a long-legged, golden-hearted Hollywood Boulevard hooker (Julia Roberts) and a cold, suave corporate raider (Richard Gere). He buys her tasteful (expensive) clothes and shows her how to act "classy"; she opens—in order—his wallet, his fly, and his heart. The only real distinction of this long and rather uneventful diversion is the radical contrast between the stars' performing styles. Roberts is all ebullience and scattershot charm. The kind word for Gere's style is minimal. He's opaque, stubbornly remote; he seems to have faxed his performance in. At its worst, the movie is just unimaginative; at its best, it's pleasant and competent. It's business-as-usual entertainment.—T.R. (Gramercy, Cinema I, 86th Street East Twin, 8th St. Playhouse, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex. . . . ¶ Embassy 1; through May 24. . . . ¶ Guild; starting May 25.)

Summer (1987; "Le Rayon Vert")—In this movie, the fifth in Eric Rohmer's six-part cycle of "Comedies and Proverbs," the filmmaker relaxed his customary iron control over narrative: the picture was made in an on-the-run documentary style, in 16-mm. and with direct sound, and the dialogue, usually chiselled and epigrammatic in his work, was largely improvised by the actors. The heroine, Delphine (Marie Rivière), is a slim, dark, delicate-featured depressive. Since breaking up with her boyfriend, she has become almost pathologically wary of experience: her response to everything is refusal. This woman is comically, absurdly incapable of enjoying herself: she drives us crazy, but she's in real pain, and Rohmer (whose art has always been based on refusal) understands her very well. The movie has the tentative, irresolute rhythm of Delphine's search for a place where she can feel comfortable on her long August holiday. The French title means "The Green Ray," and it refers to a rare visual phenomenon that occurs the instant after the sun drops below the horizon: Jules Verne wrote that it enables whoever views it to "see clearly into his own heart and the hearts of others." When this miracle appears to the wretched Delphine, in the last scene, it's one of the purest moments of happiness ever put on screen. And we feel that Rohmer, along with his heroine, has finally found a way to release himself, to be at ease with the accidents, the scary contingencies, of the natural world. It's a miraculous movie. In French.—T.R. (Thalia SoHo; May 27.)

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles—A tacky, lighthearted parody of crime-wave movies—camp for kiddies. As babies, the four turtles were let loose in radioactive muck; they mutated into hip, English-speaking people-size turtles who live in the dark sewers of New York City and send out for pizza. Their mentor, the wise old rat Splinter, has trained them in the martial arts, and they fight the criminal legions led by the Japanese, Darth Vader-like Shredder. Their human friends are the TV newswoman April O'Neil (Judith Hoag) and the daredevil Casey Jones (Elias Koteas). Everything in the movie has a playful, pop familiarity, and the jokey allusions to other movies are easy for young kids to grasp. The four turtles (stunt men in getups devised by Jim Henson's Creature Shop) are not as individualized as one might hope, but Splinter has an Alice-in-Wonderland creepiness. The director, Steve Barron, is casual with Hoag and Koteas, who blend in gracefully; he can't do much for the preachy subplot involving a father and son who misunderstand each other. (The flashbacks are the most fun.)—P.K. (Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

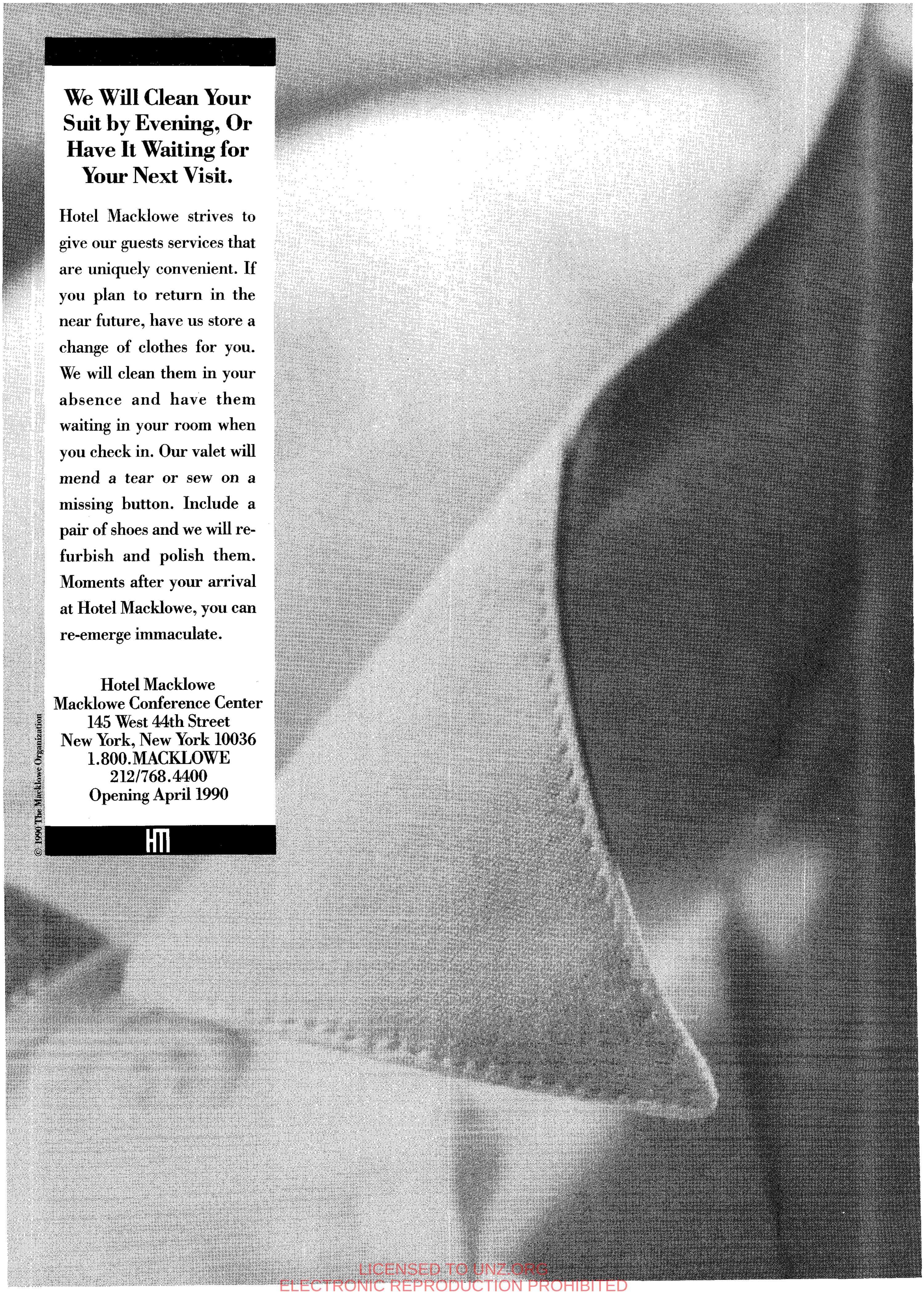
Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!—Pedro Almodóvar's new movie gets off to a fast start, like a windup toy, but it runs out of momentum early, and Almodóvar can't figure out how to start it up again. The story, about a released mental patient (Antonio Banderas) who follows a sexy actress (Victoria Abril) and then takes her prisoner, seems to tie the director's wild imagination down, and his efforts to keep his (and the audience's) blood circulating betray some desperation. Neither the kidnapper's romantic obsession nor his captive's eventual love for him is especially convincing. And we don't fully enjoy the perverse humor of the situation, either: we've seen the victim subdued by a hard slap, and that image is too strong to forget. The limpness of "Tie Me Up!" suggests that Almodóvar is either a confused director or a tired one—probably a bit of both. It's as if he had made the movie solely to satisfy the public's demand for a new Almodóvar film. Screenplay by Almodóvar. In Spanish.—T.R. (5/7/90) (Lincoln Plaza.)

The Yakuza (1975)—An attempt to sell a romantic view of gangsterism in an exotic setting. The yakuza are Japanese mobsters, and one of the items of their "code" is that you can show penitence for an offense against the mob chieftain by slicing off your little finger and presenting it to him. Robert Mitchum plays an American private eye who goes to Japan to rescue an American girl kidnapped by yakuza; he enlists the aid of a "retired" yakuza, a master-teacher of swordsmanship (Takakura Ken, or, if you prefer, Ken Takakura), and they fight side by side, the gun and the sword. At the end, Mitchum realizes that he has offended the swordsman and commits his act of penance. This is a swaggeringly meretricious fairy tale, overloaded with exposition, and solemn when it means to be Orientally inscrutable. Richard Jordan, as Mitchum's bodyguard, gives the film its only fresh, unexpected moments. The director, Sydney Pollack, doesn't seem to understand how action-film mechanisms operate. The script, by Paul Schrader, from Leonard Schrader's story, was given a rewrite by Robert Towne. With Brian Keith and Eiji Okada.—P.K. (Thalia SoHo; May 25-26.)

Kenji Mizoguchi's 1954 masterpiece, "Sansho the Bailiff," is a heartbreaking medieval fable with modern political and psychological undertones. It may seem odd for Mizoguchi to name the movie for its villain—the ruthless overseer of a private slave camp—instead of for its antihero, the late-blooming Zushio. But the choice reflects the director's tragic vision. The film is about virtue tortured, altered, and emerging only partially triumphant. Zushio's statesman father, exiled because he shielded his peasants from a military draft, taught his son that "without mercy, a man is like a beast." When kidnappers separate Zushio and his sister Anju from their mother—the siblings are sold into slavery, the mother into prostitution—the boy can't hold on to his father's ideals. In Sansho's inferno, Zushio becomes a barbarian. Like the worst concentration-camp Kapo, he willingly executes Sansho's order to brand attempted escapees on the forehead.

The first half hour, which depicts the downfall of Zushio's father and the dispersal of his family, is a cascade of flashbacks and present-tense action. (Kinuyo Tanaka brings a tremulous eloquence to the role of the mother—she's the movie's emotional center as much as the father is its conscience.) The most striking shot is of the family walking through a field of long grass and reeds, the flora floating above their heads like an army's plumes; the most devastating shot is of the mother and nurse being thrown into a boat while the children are seized on shore. Once Zushio and Anju arrive at Sansho's slave camp, the volatile lyricism gives way to a steady, cumulative power. It's as if Mizoguchi is saying, sadly, this is how the world works.

The movie explores the strength and the tenuousness of family bonds in scenes that are freshets of pure feeling. In Mizoguchi, as in Faulkner, the past isn't dead—in Faulkner's words, "It's not even past." Near the end, when Sansho sees a newly freed and elevated Zushio, the bailiff exclaims: "It's like a fairy tale. A slave becoming a governor!" But in this fairy tale no one lives happily ever after. Terrifying and cathartic, "Sansho the Bailiff" (playing May 27 at the Cinema Village) is a morality play without easy moralism.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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

THE Sudan, which is approximately the size of the United States east of the Mississippi, is the largest country in Africa, but what most Americans know about it is just about matched by the concern Washington has shown over recent events there—which is to say, very little. Washington hasn't always been so uninterested. When Colonel Jaafar Nimeiri was the Sudanese President—he seized power in a coup in 1969—he was one of the few Arab leaders to back the Camp David accords, and that earned him the appreciation of the Carter Administration. During the Reagan Administration, Nimeiri was covertly paid by the Central Intelligence Agency to provide training facilities and weapons for Libyan dissidents trying to overthrow Muammar Qaddafi, and in 1985 United States assistance to the Sudan came to three hundred and fifty million dollars; only a handful of countries received more. By then, however, the Sudanese, after sixteen years of Nimeiri's rule, had had enough of it; he had imposed Islamic law in 1983, and amputations and public floggings were not uncommon. He was overthrown, and the military officers who came to power promised to hold elections and to turn the country over to the civilians. Astonishingly, they did: in 1986, Sadiq al-Mahdi was elected President.

Under Sadiq, the Sudan was a democracy, of sorts—a rarity in Africa. There were independent newspapers, a human-rights organization, and considerable tolerance for anti-government expression. Public demonstrations forced Sadiq's government into serious negotiations with rebel forces in the southern half of the country. (They are black and predominantly Christian or animist, and off and on for thirty years have been waging a war against political and economic discrimination by the Arab north.)

All that has changed since last June, when Lieutenant General Omar Hassan Ahmed al-Bashir seized power in a military coup. He immediately closed down the independent newspapers; abolished unions and political parties and seized their property; and banned all non-religious groups, including the human-rights organization and professional associations of lawyers and doctors. Several hundred people—doctors, lawyers, union leaders, professors, journalists—were rounded up, and many were taken to secret detention centers and tortured.

General Bashir has declared that he intends to make the Sudan an Islamic state, and neighborhood committees along the lines of those in Libya and Iran have been set up; the members of a new fundamentalist organization called Security of the Revolution are responsible for many of the arrests and much of the torture. In late April, after a "trial" that lasted two hours, the Bashir government executed twenty-eight military officers who it said had been involved in an abortive coup attempt. However, according to Africa Watch, a human-rights organization that is part of the New York-based Human Rights Watch, at least six of the officers had been arrested as much as three days before the coup. Africa Watch has also raised questions about whether there really was a coup attempt or whether the government just staged one to eliminate opponents. Many of the executed officers had been involved in the uprising against Nimeiri which restored democracy to the Sudan, and a year ago they had signed a letter calling on the government to negotiate an end to the war in the south. In defending the executions, Bashir said that the officers wanted to "abolish Islamic law," and he added, "There can be no secular government in the Sudan."

Whatever it is doing to its own people, though, the Sudan isn't invading its neighbors. So is there anything the world can do? A former senior Sudanese government official—a man with a distinguished record, who now lives in exile—says that at the least the West should not ignore what is happening in the Sudan; he asks that journalists write about what is happening, and that governments speak out. There are enough people in his country who want to get rid of Bashir, he says, so that all the opposition needs from the West is some moral support.

Appearing before the Senate Subcommittee on African Affairs, in March,

Herman Cohen, the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, was reluctant to criticize the Bashir government. All he would say was that the human-rights situation in the Sudan "had deteriorated," and he quickly added that "there have been some small improvements recently." Three weeks after he testified, a Sudanese medical doctor who had been held in a secret detention center died after being tortured so brutally that he went into a coma. Washington's response to the doctor's death and to the execution of the military officers, a few days later, was silence, and no journalist has cared enough to bring up the subject in the daily State Department briefings. In Khartoum, Sudanese opposition leaders are finding a cool reception at the political section of the American Embassy, which has generally defended the Bashir government.

According to Africa Watch, there are still at least fifteen hundred political prisoners in jail in the Sudan. Recently, seventy-one prisoners—doctors, lawyers, trade unionists, and teachers—managed to get a letter out to London. "We are literally dumped in a God-forsaken spot in the heart of the desert," it said. "God-forsaken that is sure. But I am afraid that it is also forsaken by the outside world. That is what really worries us." And the letter repeated the point: "It is not these horrible conditions which really worry us. We will fight to survive them. What we really find devastating is that the regime keeps denying to the international community that we are being detained! They are denying our very existence."

Humanitarianism is rarely the engine of a country's foreign policy, and it is hard to discern what national interests of ours are threatened by the Bashir government. None, probably—at least, none for the moment. But the Sudan has reached an agreement with Libya which calls for a "complete union" of the two countries within four years. The Sudan and Libya also plan to establish a joint military command. Currently, Libya is supplying the Sudan with pilots and jet fighters, which have been used to bomb civilians in the south. And the Sudan's other major military supplier is Iraq, which has recently been expanding its nuclear and chemical-weapons capability, and whose President, Saddam Hussein, threatened last month to annihilate half of Israel. Like it or not, we may be paying more attention to the Sudan, and sooner rather than later.

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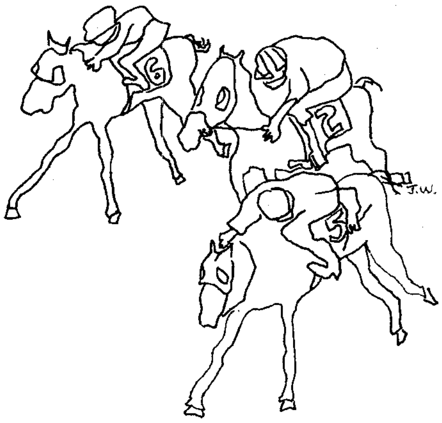
Edison, the Man

THE first week of May was Thomas Edison Week in West Orange, New Jersey. It was Thomas Edison Week not because it was the anniversary of Thomas Edison's birth (February 11, 1847) or of his death (October 18, 1931) but for a reason that would have been all too familiar to Thomas Edison: the need to raise money for Thomas Edison's laboratory.

To the casual observer driving down Main Street in West Orange it might seem that Mr. Edison's establishment had indeed fallen on hard times. A striking five-story factory building, designed with a nineteenth-century sense of style—light-puce stone facing, green-framed windows, flat-topped crenellations along the roof—seems largely empty, although the ground floor is occupied by Fabulous Wallcoverings Factory Outlet; above one entrance hangs a sign that reads "Space Available—Will Divide, West Orange-Edison Industrial Center, RE6-3262." This building used to be part of the Battery Division, where the storage battery that Edison invented was produced commercially, and it's all that is left of the manufacturing end of Edison's huge West Orange research-and-manufacturing complex. The buildings from which phonographs, records, radios, and kinetoscopes came—buildings erected on poured-concrete foundations (another Edison invention), and including the Radio Works, the Mill Buildings, the Tin Shop, the Screening Building, the Celluloid Dipping Department, and the Power House, with its two smokestacks—were dynamited in 1974 to make room for redevelopment, leaving the Battery Division and, across the street, one other remnant of the complex: what had been Thomas Edison's Research Laboratory and is now the Edison National Historic Site.



The Research Laboratory incorporated several laboratories—Physics, Chemistry, and Metallurgical—in buildings that are set at right angles to what was the main laboratory, a three-story red brick building with tall vaulted windows. Edison worked here for the last forty-four years of his life; it was his dream laboratory, built after his initial triumphs (in a lab in Menlo Park) with the phonograph and the incandescent lamp. Its running inventory filled many volumes: Edison ordered some of every metal known to man, every kind of grain, every kind of animal skin. He liked to say that the stockrooms contained "everything from an elephant's hide to the eyeballs of a United States senator."

In addition to its stockrooms the main laboratory had machine shops, glass-blowing and pumping rooms, and what is still one of the most beautiful private libraries in the world: three stories of glass-fronted bookcases; elegant wooden railings; ten thousand volumes; dozens of framed photographs (among them one showing Edison standing between Henry Ford and Harvey Firestone); a stuffed bald eagle; a cubic foot of copper on a pedestal; two sculptures (one, "The Genius of Electricity," is a squirming marble Cupid holding up a lighted bulb, and the other is a bronze Orpheus who, having thrown away his lyre, cradles a phonograph record); Edison's rolltop desk, which was locked in the hours after his death by his son Charles (later the governor of New Jersey) and was reopened in 1947 amid great media fanfare, exposing some old cigars and stomach pills; and an elaborate carved wooden clock, which was stopped three minutes after Edison died.

The clock wasn't the only thing that was stopped that day; research at the lab was, too. The laboratory buildings can be visited only on guided tours, because everything in them has been left pretty much as it was. White wooden cupboards in the chemistry lab still hold dozens of glass bottles of "Geisenheimer Dyes," "Hydrocarbons," "Alcohols," "Magnesium," "Calcium," and "Rare Metals," and there are jars of yellow powders ("Goldenrod") and blue ("Nickel Hydrate") within easy reach of curious children. There are stacks of yellowing *India Rubber Worlds* and *Tire Reviews.* There are buckets of sand on the floor for putting out fires. In the machine shop, there are heaps of jagged metal scraps underneath a huge radial drill press, and on the wall there are instructions for proper conduct during a fire drill: "Don't scream or make unnecessary noise, Don't return for your clothing, Don't remain in toilet, Don't laugh." The lab is a place for looking, not touching—a place where a tour guide in full Park Ranger regalia has to stand between the site and the visitors to prevent damage to both.

Hundreds of groups of schoolchildren visit the Edison National Historic Site every year, but some have to be turned away—a state of affairs that the recently formed Motion Picture Centennial Committee of the Friends of Edison National Historic Site has declared "criminal." Thomas Edison Week not only launched a flurry of fund-raising aimed at an enlargement of the site but also commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of the première, in West Orange, of "Edison, the Man," starring Spencer Tracy—an event that elicited the local 1940 headline "ALL THE ORANGES WERE AGOG."

The people—several hundred of them—who came to "Edison, the Man" at the Paper Mill Playhouse, in nearby Milburn, during Edison Week got to see a figure that any parent might describe as a role model: Edison the genius, "the Napoleon of Science," "the Wizard of Menlo Park"; the tireless, driven philanthropist who gave us light bulbs and phonographs and moving pictures; the American who invented stick-to-itiveness single-handed, and said "Genius is one per cent inspiration and ninety-nine per cent perspiration"; the Edison who was honest and generous to a fault, a good father and loving husband; the boss who cared more about "his men" than about himself; the Edison who started out as "the best telegraph operator in the country" and ended up as a wise old grandfather in a waistcoat and a bow tie, with a halo of white hair. In other words, a pure invention.

"Bush asked us not to gloat."

The real Edison was what people used to call "a caution." He lost his first job—selling newspapers and tending the oil lamp on the train from Port Huron to Detroit—at age twelve by starting a phosphorus fire in the baggage car; shortly thereafter, he blew out the wall of an icehouse with gunpowder. As a telegrapher, he was twice fired for spilling or exploding acid, and, according to Robert Conot, the author of "Thomas A. Edison: A Streak of Luck," "he was a miserable transmitter . . . and an uncertain receiver." As a night operator on the Grand Trunk Railroad, he forgot to change a semaphore and derailed a train. Following a recipe in *Scientific American* for making nitroglycerin, he produced an entire jarful, and when it became unstable he disposed of it in a city sewer. He was known to his fellow "tramp" telegraphers as the Looney. This part of his life was covered in the 1939 movie "Young Tom Edison," starring Mickey Rooney. (Actually, until his second marriage Edison was known as Al.)

As an adult, Edison, not a devoted family man, was reckless with his health and genially irresponsible with his money. He lived off pie and coffee and smoked twenty cigars a day; he once planned to invent Edison's Perpetual Segar. He did invent Edison's Polyform, an elixir that promised "IMMEDIATE RELIEF OF NEURALGIC PAINS." It probably relieved just about anything: it consisted of morphine, chloroform, ether, and knockout drops suspended in alcohol. He stayed up all night at the lab and slept in a storage closet on a pile of old newspapers. He thought it was bad for a person to take off his clothes, so he slept in them. He didn't like taking baths. He didn't like wearing a watch. And, most particularly, he didn't like paying bills. Edison ran his businesses the way the United States now runs its economy: by borrowing and borrowing and borrowing, and ignoring huge amounts of debt. Once, when a boss took charge of the laboratory's books, he exploded, "*You cannot expect* a man to invent and work night and day and then be worried to a point of exasperation about how to obtain money to pay bills." Spencer Tracy, his eyes heavenward, says, "I didn't hunt for the light for a period of years because of money. . . . I did it so people everywhere could have a safer and a brighter light." Edison said, "I always invent to obtain money to go on inventing." And his lab worked not only on the phonograph and the electric light but on early models of the torpedo and the electric chair.

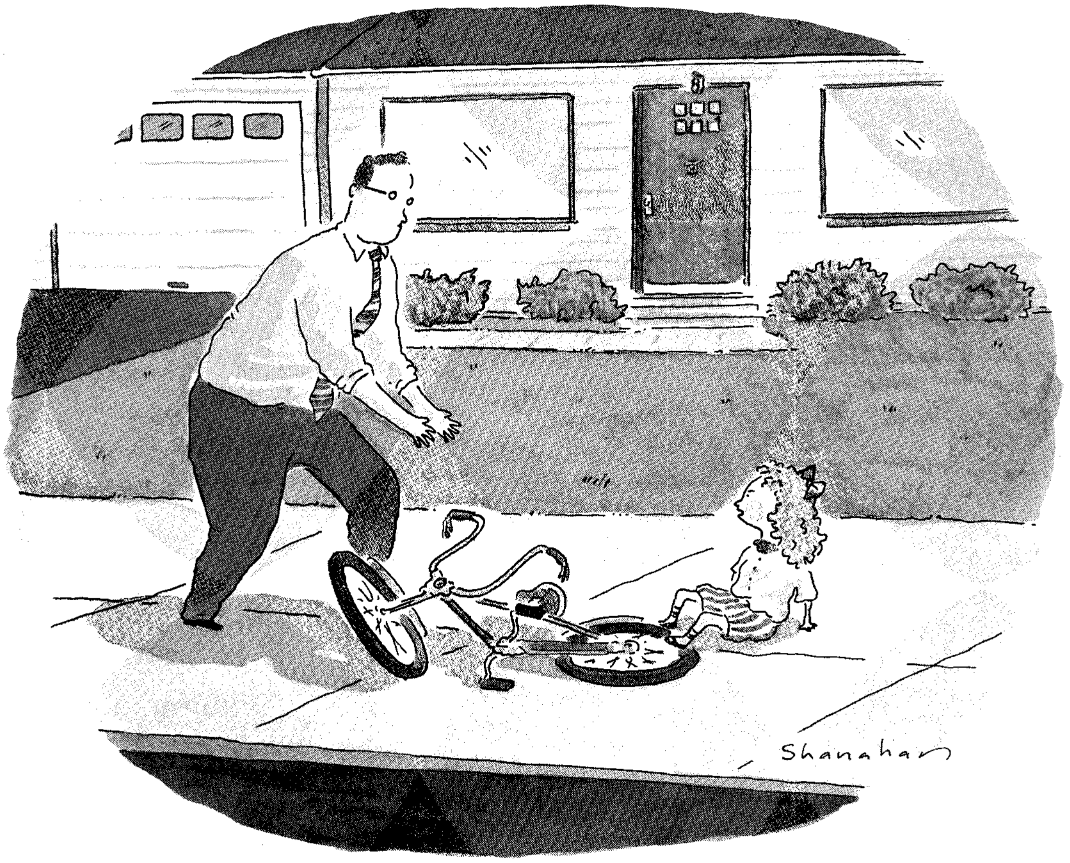
Spencer Tracy makes it all look easy. He invents the phonograph in about five minutes; it immediately quotes "Mary had a little lamb" back to him, perfectly audibly and comprehensibly. Edison had a lot more trouble. According to his biographer, "the phonograph had a terrible lisp, and refused absolutely to pronounce the hissing sibilants." Edison and his men soon grew bored with "Mary had a little lamb," and invented variations: "Mary has a new sheath gown, It is too tight by half. Who cares a damn for Mary's lamb, When they can see her calf!" Edison's first wife, Mary (played in the movie by the tall, willowy Rita Johnson as a supportive, responsible spouse), was just as irresponsible about paying bills as he was, and, depressed and anxious about his constant absences, sometimes ate more than a pound of chocolates a day. She died at the age of twenty-nine.

The film ends with Tracy, as an old Edison, addressing those who would carry on after him: "The dynamo of man's God-given ingenuity is running away with him. . . . But what man's mind can conceive, man's character can control. Then we needn't be afraid of tomorrow and man can go forward toward more light!" The real Edison may not have been so optimistic. Business suffered in the nineteen-twenties, and he stopped producing phonographs and recordings in 1929.

The tour of the Edison National Historic Site ends outside the Physics Laboratory, on an asphalt walkway where a plaque beneath a stone lantern reads "In Order to Express Forever the Appreciation of the Japanese People of the Services Done by the Late Thomas Alva Edison for the Welfare of Mankind, We Respectfully Present Herewith a Stone Lantern as a Memorial Gift to His Tomb." It is signed by the chairman of the Edison Memorial Committee of Japan and dated February 11, 1935.

Versatility

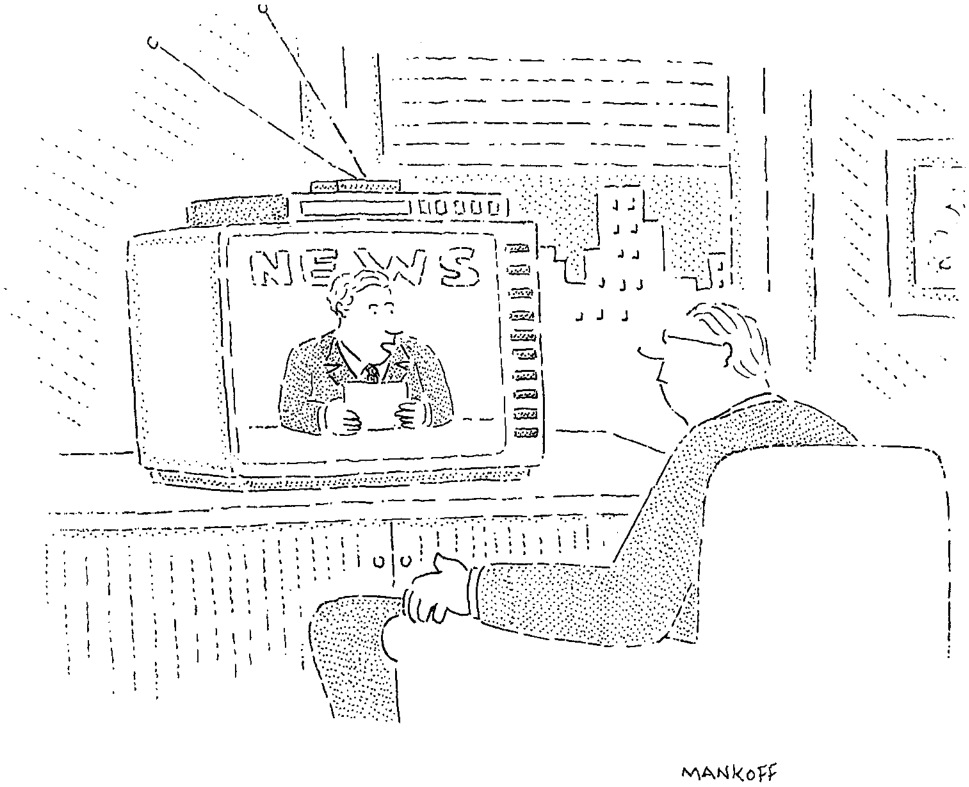
In no sense is anyone associated with the Catfish Institute experiencing a feeling even remotely approaching panic. Concern is much more like it. The Catfish Institute is confident, certainly, and optimistic, but, just the same, *concerned*. In 1970, the annual per-capita consumption of farm-raised catfish in the United States was not quite a mouthful. Last year, it got all the way up to a hefty second helping. Figuring out a way to maintain this steady growth in market share—doing whatever it takes to enable catfish to become "the chicken of the nineties"—is what at the moment has the Catfish Institute people feeling confidently, optimistically concerned. It was William (Bill) Allen, Jr., the president of the Catfish Institute and a resident of Belzoni, Mississippi, which is "the Catfish Capital of the World" (and the site of the annual World Catfish Festival), who this past February appealed personally to T. N. (Tommy) Turner, Jr., the Mayor of Belzoni, and to its Board of Aldermen to draft and adopt a resolution inviting the people of Garda, Italy (site of the annual Sardellata, or Sardine Festival), to formalize a "Treaty of Friendship." If all goes as is hoped, the treaty will not only achieve the stated goal of "creating a greater mutual understanding between the peoples of our two great cities and nations"; it will specifically result in an exchange of recipes between the wives of sardine fishermen in Garda and the wives of catfish farmers in Belzoni. Mr. Allen also participated directly in the decision to hold a press luncheon the other day at the United Nations Plaza Hotel, the goal of which was to create a greater understanding of the utility of farm-raised catfish in dishes with exotic names. The menu included catfish piroshki, catfish al forno, catfish in filo, catfish couscous, catfish paella, Mexican catfish salad, and several other concoctions that few people had expressed cravings for until the Catfish Institute launched its global goodwill endeavors.



"I've had it with the nineties!"

During a cocktail hour before the luncheon, Judith Ludwig, a public-relations woman who lives in New York but selflessly devotes her energies to boosting the Mississippi catfish industry, said to us, "What we're trying to do now is to position catfish as a product that has burst the bonds of conventional American cookery—that is equally at home in any international dish. People have a tendency to think of fish as *fish*. Wherever it's appropriate to have a white-meat product—say, chicken breasts *or* fish—we want consumers to think of catfish. Going international with catfish is a way to hit the versatility angle a little harder."

When Judith Ludwig mentioned the treaty of friendship between Belzoni and Garda, we asked her the name of the mayor of Garda. "It's in the press kit," she said. Prior commitments prevented the mayor of Garda—Giorgio Pasotti, according to *ibid.*—from attending the press luncheon. Nor, as it happened, was Mayor Tommy Turner able to be on hand. Not even Mayor Turner's son Newell, who has burst the bonds of Belzoni and is living in Manhattan and doing very nicely as an assistant editor at *Metropolitan Home*, could make it. However, representatives from the Voice of America, *Good Housekeeping*, *Weight Watchers Magazine*, *Food Service Director*, *Food Management Magazine*, *Working Mother*, *Practical Gourmet*, *Black Elegance*, and the *Amsterdam News* did come. Mike McCall, the editor of *The Catfish Journal* (not to be confused with its rival publication, *Catfish/AquaCulture News*), also showed up. Regrettably, Phylis Vandervere, who last month was crowned Catfish Queen at the World Catfish Festival, stayed home in Yazoo City, Mississippi. Contestants for Catfish Queen are judged by their beauty, stage appearance, poise, and personality. The most earnest Catfish Queen contestants have been known to wear slinky blue sequinned gowns with scooped backs that expose their dorsal fins, and to recite testimonials like "To me, the catfish industry truly represents the American dream." In selecting Ms. Vandervere as the 1990 Catfish Queen, the judges signified their confidence that she will display unalloyed grace and charm throughout her reign, and, unlike one of the Catfish Queens from a couple of years back, will not be forced to resign under duress for conduct unbecoming a Catfish Queen.



"A preliminary census report indicates that for the first time in our nation's history female anthropologists outnumber male professional golfers."

• •

When Bill Allen works a crowd like the one gathered in the Trygve Lie Room at the United Nations Plaza Hotel, he speaks in his regular voice, which has the natural inflection that Rod Steiger was trying to capture in "In the Heat of the Night," and he starts off by saying, "Ah'm Bill Allen, of the Catfish Institute. Ah'm a native of Brooklyn." Then he presents a nice slide show, rattling off persuasive statistics along the way. He talks about how catfish is "delicious, versatile, nutritious, and easy to prepare," about its "mild, delicate flavor when it's farm-raised and fed," about how the Catfish Institute's mission is to make catfish consumption "a permanent life-style change and a trend rather than a fad," and about market research that has established that "consumers don't want to be in the kitchen but about ten minutes." When he refers to the recipes in the Catfish Institute's new cookbook, "Catfish: The World Tour," he says, "We don't make them so esoteric so they're un-user-friendly." When he shows a slide of a hand holding a jar of catfish fingerlings, he says, "We might could of gotten a better shot. This man bites his fingernails. But if you had a catfish farm you might bite yours, too."

One point that Mr. Allen constantly reiterates is that commercial catfish aquaculture has no truck with the sorts of river-dwelling, mudsucking scavengers who grow to weigh three or four hundred pounds and have eyes the size of basketballs and enjoy biting off the arms of nosy scuba divers. Mr. Allen's catfish live in clean ponds and eat gourmet-calibre floating grain pellets until they grow to be a pound and a half or so, at which point they volunteer to wind up atop a designer pizza. Mr. Allen is such a gentleman that if he lays out a bunch of money for a fancy press luncheon and one of the invited guests stands up and says that she's fond of Hudson River catfish, because she likes her catfish to have a "fishy fish taste," he smiles and says, "Well, what you might enjoy, then, is to take a fillet of our mild, delicate-flavored farm-raised catfish and squeeze some anchovy paste all over it."

I TALK TO THE END OF THE WORLD

DEAR ____

In our July "literary" issue we want to run the results of this sex survey, the answers to this questionnaire which we're sending to one hundred or so of you sexy, well-known authors. Don't be outraged by it, just be amused and friendly and cooperative. Maybe you won't want to answer all of the questions, but please don't neglect Question #11, which I thought up myself . . .

Thanks.

RUST

We hope you'll sign this for us, but will understand if you don't . . .

1. When did you lose your virginity?
2. What were the circumstances?
3. What are your sexual fantasies?
4. How many times do you have orgasm during a week?
5. How does your sexual activity affect your productivity as a writer?
6. Do you find yourself using your sexual fantasies in your work?
7. What sort of sadistic or masochistic behavior have you engaged in?
8. How do the pleasures of sex compare to those of writing and reading?
9. Under what circumstances have you ever succumbed to the advances of an admirer?
10. In what countries do you think writers have healthier sex lives than in America?
11. In which section of this country have you had the most success sexually?
12. What do you think is the sexiest scene in literature?
13. What fellow writer do you find the sexiest, either in person or in his or her work?
14. Do you feel most sexually aroused before, during or after writing?
15. What's the best place you ever had sex?

—Letter and questionnaire sent by the editor of "Esquire" to a famous and sexy writer, but not this one.

I DON'T know how you see the End of the World in your mind's eye, but I see it as a very pretty girl who comes up and says, "Hi, are you ____ ?," reading off my name from a three-by-five file card, mispronouncing it slightly, and then says, "Lina needs you to fill out this survey." While I try to decide if I know any Linas, another girl, this one astonishingly pretty, in a short, strapless red dress with a tight, almost corseted waist and an amazing bodice, comes up and says, "Hi, I'm Lina. May I see your letter?" Since this conforms to a sadomasochistic fantasy of mine (Question 7) which has always resulted in increased productivity for me as a writer (Question 5) because I like to use these motifs in my work (Question 6), I am really pleased. I know what to do. I act clumsy and out of it.

"What letter?" I ask.

"The letter we sent you," Lina says. "I can't let you fill out the form unless you received a letter."

"But I . . ." Then I look down, and there is a letter in my lap.

"We need for you to tell us, 'When did you lose your virginity?' " Lina says.

I think about my virginity.

I look down at the letter. It's from *Esquire*, of course. Always, the letter comes from *Esquire*. They have been working me over for years.

"You're not responding," Lina says.

But I am, I am, I think. My mind remembers my virginity, which was closely tied up with an *Esquire* pinup of a girl in a sheer plastic raincoat. She was so pretty! She was naked! Was there a little duck sitting in a mud puddle looking up at her? Was I, in many ways, *like that duck*? Was there a caption—"All Wet"? What *is* the role of *Esquire* in modern life, anyway?

Lina is standing over me. Suddenly one red fingernail is pulled down my cheek.

"Hey, that hurts!" I say.

"We need you to tell us, 'When did you lose your virginity?' " Lina says. She is writing on my cheek with her fingernail. "Honey, your skin is *dry*," she says. She has made a big "V" for "virgin" on my left cheek. Suddenly I know that this is the End of the World, not a dream. I feel the big "V" on my cheek, like a badge of some kind.

"That's it," she says. "Just be friendly and coöperative."

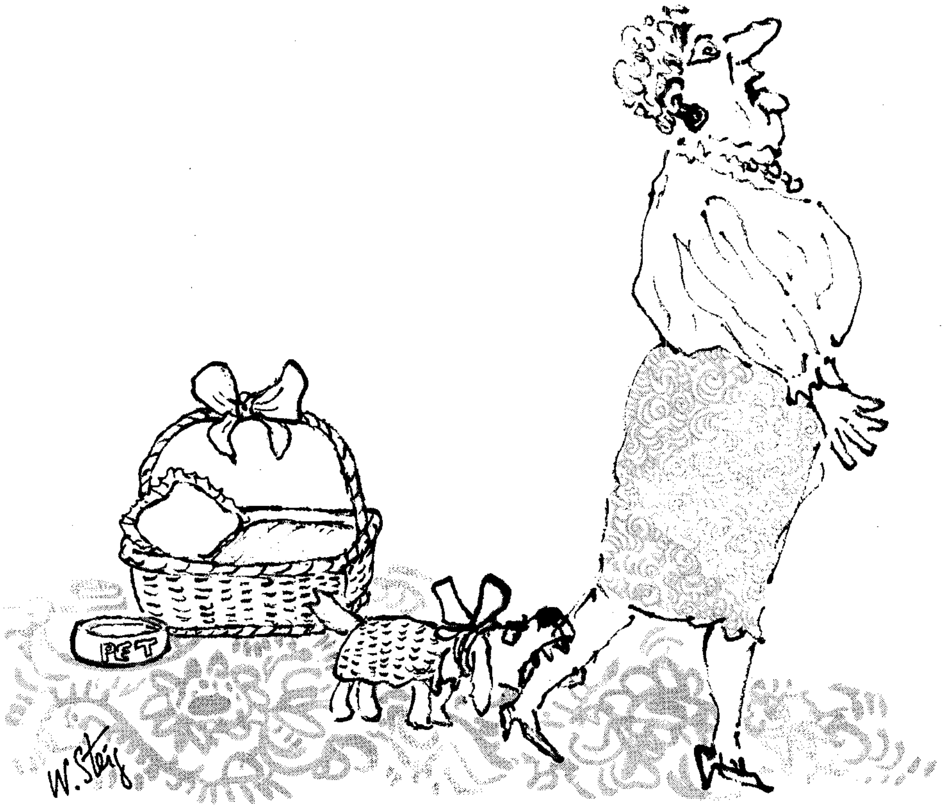
"It was a moonlit night. I was fifteen," I tell her.

She writes that down. Is she an automaton? If I told her, "One night on Mars, I was six," would she write that down? I keep going: "It was a subdebutante party at the house of the richest family in town. We didn't know them socially, but Marcelle, their daughter, had been taking French classes at our local high school."

"Whoa, big boy," Lina says.

Now a man comes out. He is a big blond guy. Lina doesn't bother to acknowledge him, but I do. "Hi," I say.

Lina turns to the questionnaire. "In Question Number Two, we need to know, 'What were the circumstances?' " she says.



Ingrate

"I showed up in a simple business suit," I say. "There was a smart-ass cop at the gate who didn't think I was swell enough, but I got past him all right. At the big house they had gone in to dinner already. A footman took me to my room. Wow! What a setup! He told me I could order from the kitchen. I did—a big rare steak, and from the bar a Martini. This was just when people were beginning to wear short dinner jackets and soft white collars. About 1919."

"That's all the room we have for that one," Lina says smoothly. "Question Number Three. I need to have you tell us, 'What are your sexual fantasies?' "

I am determined to please her now, but I am a little defiant, and I manage to steal another look at the letter before answering. "Don't be outraged by it, just be amused and friendly and coöperative" is what I read.

Then I make my move. If I am going to coöperate, then she is going to have to coöperate, too! "Do you really work for *Esquire* magazine?" I murmur.

She jerks away from me. This is it, I think; I'm sunk. But she shows me only a little of the destructive force she has at her disposal. In my mind's eye I see an amazing sight—Lina as a giant red star—but, on the other hand, she is still standing next to me. "Listen, I'm the End of the World," she says. "I don't *work* for *Esquire* magazine, I just give them access." And she says this in an intimate, friendly tone.

"Let's go for a walk," I say, and I reach for her hand.

"Don't be a sexist brute," she says. "I could have you arrested. Or file for damages."

"What would you claim?"

"Harassment."

"For trying to hold your hand?"

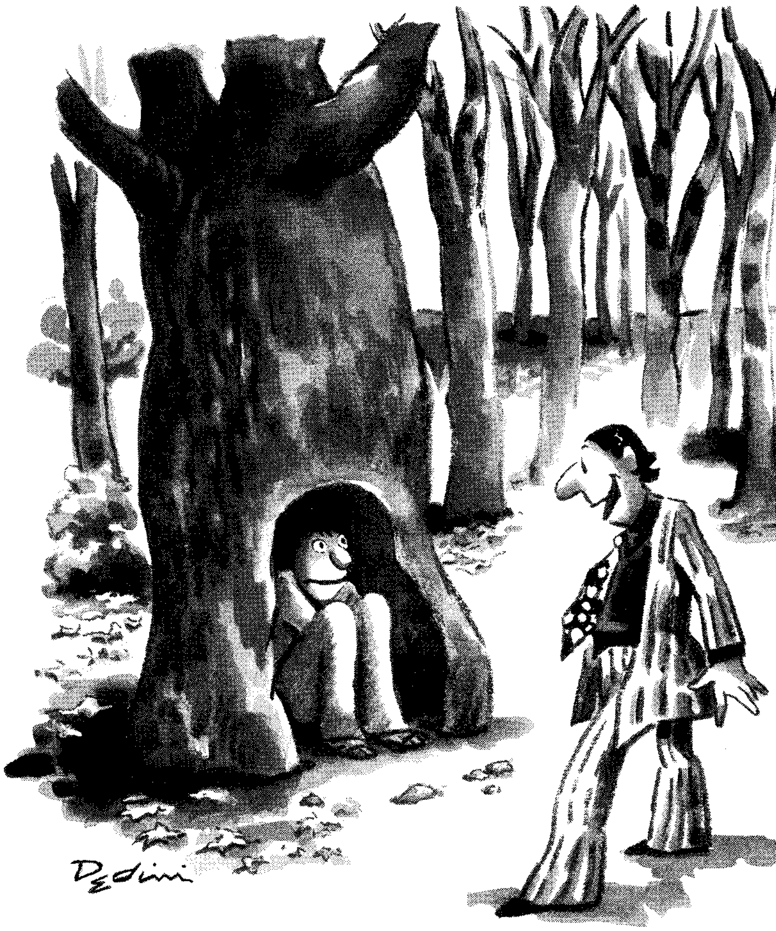
"Listen, buster, my hand is my own. Listen . . ." Suddenly she goes back to a businesslike tone. "What we need for you to do is tell me, 'How many times do you have orgasm during a week?' "

"Do you do this for doctors? For lawyers?"

"We'll skip that one. I'll just put down 'N.A.' Oh, I have to go back. I need to have you tell me, 'What are your sexual fantasies?' "

"I'll tell you if we can take a walk."

"Tell me *now*."



"Qué pasa, Lyle? You've been absent from the charts for a while."

"O.K. I've had a fight with my father. He is wearing little elkskin shoes. This is before the whole animal-rights thing. I get in my Marmon."

"Is that an animal? How do you spell it?"

"M-A-R-M-O-N. It's a kind of car."

"Oh, that's sweet. Japanese?"

"No, American. Anyway, I drive into the night. This is in Pennsylvania. I drive down into a valley and up onto the top of a big hill, following a path illuminated by a strong light. It leads to a country club. Some fool with a flask comes in then and says, 'You better not crash this party,' but he gives me a drink. 'It's an engagement party,' he says. I go and stand on the terrace. From the terrace I can look into the big room where they are having the party. I see the mother and the father of the bride-to-be, and they look so affectionate. And the girl herself looks happy—no other word. It is the only really happy-looking party I have ever seen."

She is writing frantically. "That's all I can fit in the space," she says. "You'll have to stop." While she struggles to catch up with me, I look down at the letter: *Maybe you won't want to answer all of the questions, but please don't neglect Question #11.*

"Could we just go to Number Eleven?" I ask.

"No. Question Number Six: 'Do you find yourself using your sexual fantasies in your work?' "

"Yes."

"Question Number Seven: 'What sort of sadistic or masochistic behavior have you engaged in?' "

I give her a look, which seems to say, Maybe you can *force* me to tell you. But under the surface I am thinking, Let's go for a walk.

She looks up. Really, she is something. The red dress probably cost three thousand dollars. It is short, and below it are her legs, which are doing as much for her as the dress is. "I bought the dress, I have the legs"—that is her whole point of view. So I say

ICE CREAM and SUMMER RENTALS
FIRE ISLAND · HAMPTONS · BERKSHIRES

that. "I bought the dress, I have the legs."

"O.K. That was interesting," she says, and writes something down.

"I never felt so good," I say. "Let's go for a walk."

LINA and I walked out-of-doors. We were in the Bronx, at the edge of the Harlem River, near the railroad bridge. It really looked desolate. No one was around. We walked over the bridge. How beautiful the water was! It sparkled. I looked down on the footpath; sweet grasses were growing. The bridge grows more and more gentle, I thought. I took Lina's hand, and we looked down into the water.

"Let's take off our shoes," I said.

We were doing it; Lina was sitting down on a spar, once black with pitch but now worn into a brown filamented bench for her rump. Storms of acid rain had worn away the pine tar; the spar felt like a violent man we were sitting on, having subdued him. Above us and to our right was the dark city, so gentle in its age of violence.

"Certainly the anger of stars has to do with pleasure," I said.

"What do you mean—the stars in the sky are angry?"

"No," I said, "I am talking about princes."

"You want to tell a story?"

"Yes, but I want to tell a story the way God would tell it—from his point of view."

"That's asking a lot," Lina said. "I could tell you a story, about when my mother and I ran a gift shop in Stamford, Connecticut, and we both were interested in the same man."

"God wants to hear how we think things have turned out."

"You better let me tell you about Luigi instead."

But then we were silent. She was *really* silent, and under the bridge the water was the gentlest, most brilliant flow, setting the pace, so I said, "A star is a kind of prince, and a prince—even in democracies like ours, or especially here—may be defined as one who knows, all evidence to the contrary, that he is capable of giving pleasure."

"That's too much for me."

"O.K. Give me one more."

"Under what circumstances have you ever succumbed to the advances of an admirer?"

"And Eleven?"

"In which section of this country have you had the most success sexually?"

"Pennsylvania."

She wrote this down. "What do you think is the sexiest scene in literature?"

> "Boys," he said, with an implication of a question coming.
>
> "Yes sir?" said Lex.
>
> Thornton raised his glass. "I hoped for this moment, the three of us together like this, as much as I hoped for victory. God bless you." He drank his drink bottoms-up, then tossed the glass on the flagstone floor. He put a hand on Lex's shoulder, the other hand on Alfred's shoulder. "I'm a little overcome, but I'll be all right."
>
> "To you sir," said Alfred.
>
> "Bottoms up," said Lex.
>
> They drank, and smashed their glasses.

I quoted it for her.

Lina didn't even try to write it down. She just said, "That is sexy." Then she looked at me. "Let's go back to that sexual fantasy of yours where you're outside the country club. I think I can make room."

"Well, I just stand there. The wind is blowing, so I can't hear what is said. It is a happy party. Three or four girls there are as pretty as any girls ever are. One is dark, one is a kind of big blonde with a big mouth, dressed very expensively, one has what you might call classic looks, the kind that keep people at a distance, except that everybody here knows her and likes her."

"That's a very good sexual fantasy," Lina says. "It really is."

"John O'Hara."

"That answers Question Thirteen, I guess. Too bad they don't ask 'What is the sexiest car?' I guess that would be a Marmon for you." She put the survey down.

"So what's it like, being the End of the World—professionally, I mean?"

"It's mostly R. & D., special assignments, and so forth. No one wants you full time. We do this, the Swimsuit Issue, special books with advertising, a little tabloid TV."

I was quiet, but she knew what I meant.

"Well, right after this I have to interview a boy who has first-degree burns or third-degree burns, I forget which is the most serious kind of burns, but he has them. Then I'm free, if you promise to tell me about those little elkskin shoes."

—GEORGE W. S. TROW

KAY'S PLEASURE

TODAY, as on many days this August, Kay was enjoying the unobstructed view from her dining-room window. She was watching her neighbor Larry Seitz, who lived in the pink brick ranch house across the street and two houses closer to the dead end. He was in his late twenties, Kay thought, and he lived alone.

Larry taught junior-high art, so he had the summer off. He'd been at the beach most of the time, but these last two weeks he'd been home, lying in the sun every clear day. He had to sunbathe on the front lawn, because his side of the street bordered a thirty-acre stretch of woods that blocked all the backyard sun. When Kay's husband, Roy, was still himself—back when they'd have the occasional wicked fight—she had sometimes run across the street and into those woods, down the steep path that crossed the dainty, sewage-generated creek. After a while, feeling ridiculous yet genuinely sorrowful, she'd climb back up the path, only to emerge, often as not, into a yard where, by that time, there were people—the Hohenadels with friends, barbecuing, or, if she had turned off the path earlier, Larry Seitz and a girl, smooching among the willows.

Larry's back was too muscular, Kay thought, like something you'd see on ESPN. He couldn't move his arms without triggering any number of new formations and consolidations from his shoulders down. But the front of his body was just superb—ample, planed, ridged, whittled, and distorted correctly. His black hair was buzzed into an elegant crewcut, and he had small, hidden eyes. Kay preferred them to her husband's, which were large and forlorn. Larry wore special sunbathing shorts, cut girlishly high, which Kay had never seen anywhere but in the pages of her son's old magazines. He had a green bandanna knotted around his ankle today, and Kay wondered why; she thought it was an unfortunate accessory.

Some days she would watch Larry until her arms ached from holding the binoculars to her face. This afternoon, however, she was interrupted by Kevin, her brother-in-law. He worked the first shift as a factory foreman in Reading, but like all of Roy's family he lived in the same Lancaster school district he'd grown up in. At night Kevin worked as a kind of intermediary bookmaker; he'd sit by the phone in front of two televisions, taking bets and keeping track of new lines on whatever sports were in season. That morning he'd talked to his nighttime boss, Leon, for Kay.

When she saw his VW approach, Kay put the binoculars on the dining-room table and went into the kitchen. She filled two glasses with ice, poured bottled water into a pitcher, and sat at the kitchen table, waiting for him.

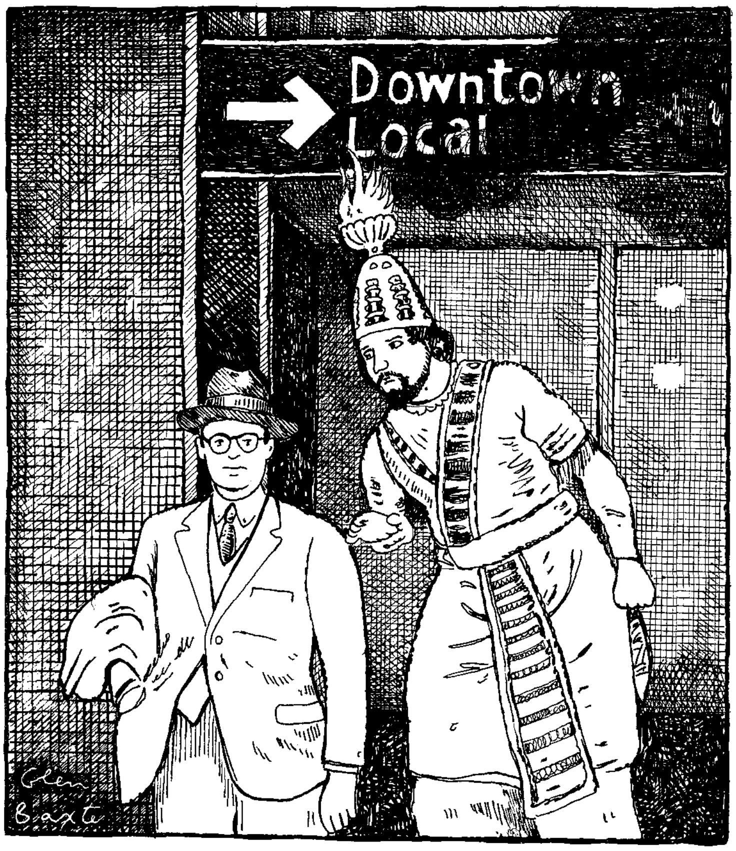
He knocked twice and came in. As she did each time she saw one of Roy's three brothers, Kay felt a mellow despair well up in her stomach, in her chest, and in her head. Kevin sat down across from her. His modest, pleasing face made her husband, sick and upstairs in bed, seem farther away, a just remembered, cherished old friend.

"Hi, Kevin," Kay said. "How are Gena and the girls?"

"Good, they're good." He poured water for Kay and himself and drained his glass. Kay had acquired from Roy's family the habit of drinking great amounts of water. "Anyways," Kevin continued quickly, "it was the bad news we figured on. Leon can't run a tab for you."

"Shit." Kay had expected this. Her husband owed Leon six thousand dollars, most of it from the football playoffs. Roy couldn't have made many bets after that, because he'd started getting sick around Christmas. Local doctors hadn't understood what was causing him, at fifty-three, to exhibit the symptoms of a kind of accelerated Alzheimer's. They'd ruled out everything, even implausible tropical bugs. They'd sent him to Johns Hopkins, to the National Institutes of Health, to Temple and Penn and Hershey Medical Center. Those months, from December to May, Kay had acted as a secretary: she'd gathered and carried records from hospital to hospital, kept track of Roy's medications, read up on new advances in trade journals whose advertisements for new equipment, drugs, and software left her breathless. Since May, Roy had been home, declining.

"So," Kevin was saying, suddenly effusing confidence, "the solution we talked about before looks right. Roy has three brothers who love him



HUBERT K. WESTLEY HAD BEGUN TO REALIZE THAT MOMENTS SUCH AS THIS HAD SIMPLY TO BE FILED UNDER THE HEADING "LIFE'S RICH TAPESTRY."

PURE CONVERSATION WITH A CHINESE CHARACTER

I.

I'm trying to spell out a state of amazement,
A sweet dilation, the sway of spirit,
But I only find room in your shape.
They say that
Transposed in our alphabet
A Chinese sentence can turn into
A series of one and the same conjunction.
For instance: "And and. And and and. And and and and."
This is a genuine transcription of the beautiful poem
"The Dance of the Yangtze River Valley
And the Yangtze River."

II.

Well, how many miracles, how many Chinese miracles,
Have I missed this time?
Too shrunk within the heart of Europe,
Stuck to Greek reason,
Spoiled by syllogism,
And born too late for the Far East!

III.

No one gave me a silk scroll as a present
At the time of the Han dynasty,
Much less during the coming ones.
My feet didn't develop corns on the silk road,
My shadow didn't pass on the winding way
To take the desert oases in its arms.
I never wrapped my shoulders
In the wavy mantle of the Yellow River.

In 120 B.C.
I didn't show myself—idiot!—
At the Music Chamber.
What melodies I could have heard!
My ear, a shell devoid of the sea's roar,
Missed the treasure of sounds
Invading north to south.
Would I have still remained
With so many uncertainties?

IV.

I was late to the contest of impromptu poems
And didn't make libations to the Muse
Along with Wang Xizhi.
I wish I'd seen how they spelled
"The literary spirit and the dragon engravings."
Humble observer, hidden in a fold of time,
I wish I could participate unseen
In the painting of the world's first landscape.
It would have included me no doubt
As an accident on the horizon,
A leaf on the sky's water.
I wish I'd been a judge when the names were checked
Or, lazily lying in the Doctrine of the Great Vehicle,
I wish I'd wandered beyond nature's limits,
And been struck by the sensation of a universal vacuum.

V.

I wonder if
The five rice measures
Would have finally revealed
The vital principle.

VI.

Can't you say anything,
Beautifully written character?
The Big Wall goes in you
Like the moon in a cocoon.
Open the silk door a moment
And let this state of amazement in—
Include this lotus flower
In your closed-circuit breath.

Why are you so silent,
When you used to tell me about all these things?

—MARIN SORESCU

(*Translated, from the Romanian, by Gabriela Dragnea and Stuart Friebert.*)

• •

and love you, too, Kay. We won't play golf in Myrtle Beach this year. We'll each kitty in two thousand, and Leon's paid."

"Well, I accept," Kay said. "Of course. I have no options. But, as I can, I'll pay you back."

Kevin reached into his back pocket and pulled out his wallet and an accordion-folded piece of paper. "We set up a special account for you to pay us back. Every five hundred bucks you come up with they'll put in a C.D."

"O.K., Kevin." She got up from the table and went to the pantry. "You want a cookie?"

Kevin looked down at his stomach and said, "O.K., but just one. They're Oreos?"

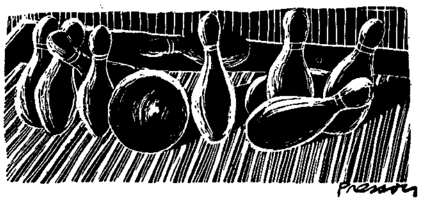
"Yes," Kay said, shaking a bag in the air.

"I better not."

Kay looked into the bag. "Hmmm. I eat a dozen at a time and then smile in front of a mirror."

"Kay, please."

She shrugged and put the cookies away. "You wanna see your brother today? I can bring him down."



Kevin's eyes went soft in the same way that Roy's eyes did, and he said, "I don't really want to see him. I'm not feeling right today."

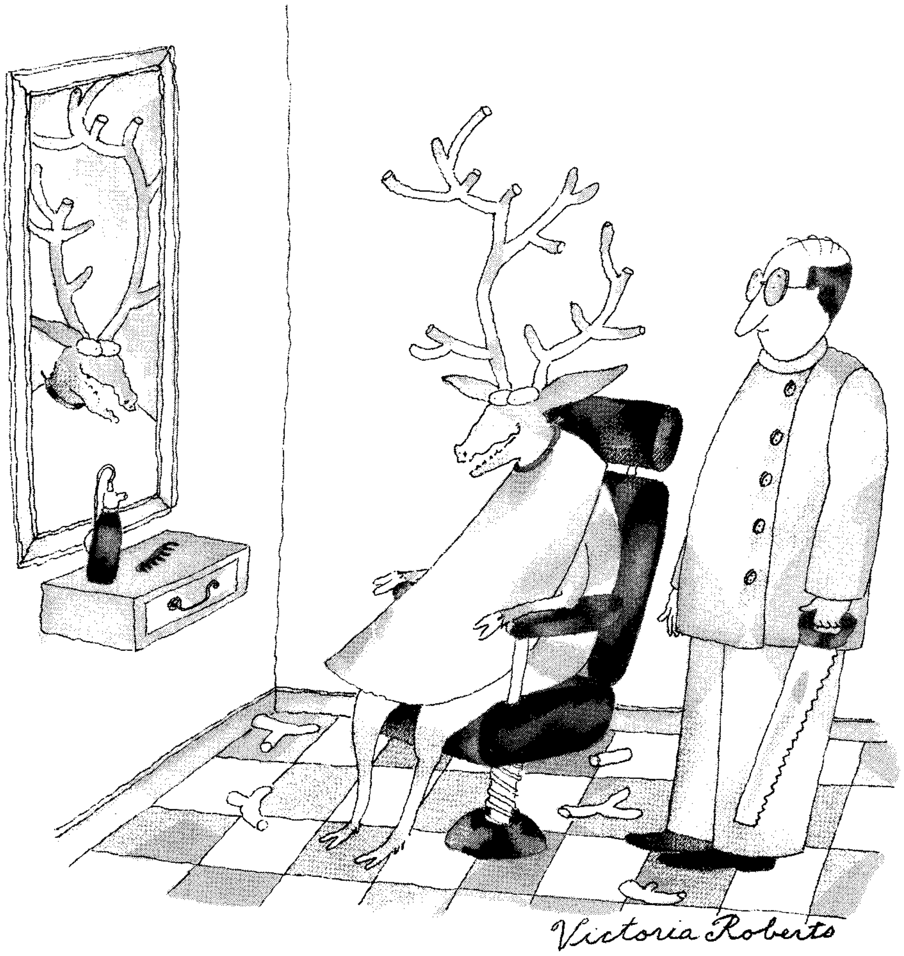
"I don't want to see him, either," Kay said, hoping she didn't sound as scared to Kevin as he had just sounded to her. She looked around the kitchen, suddenly overcome, and began to cry.

AFTER Kevin left, Kay went right upstairs to check on her husband. He was sitting on his bed, whimpering. Kay got a clean diaper from the bureau and then sat beside him. She pushed his shoulders onto the bed, lifted his legs, and rotated his body so that she could change him. Some days he seemed like a withdrawn version of his old self, but there were times when he seemed to lose all of his living skills. The bad days were infrequent, but they meant stains on the furniture, broken glass, overflowing sinks.

He has no children, she thought, and mine don't love him. Kay's kids were still so young that she granted them their selfishness. Lynn had gone through Penn State in three years and had just moved in with her boyfriend. They lived in Philadelphia, where they were underwriters for the same insurance company. Kay's boy, Ryan, had lived in Philadelphia, then in D.C., and was now in New Orleans, surviving—Kay did not know how.

Kay looked at Roy's uncomprehending face; she struggled to hide the revulsion she felt. She had to tell herself: This is my husband, whom I love. She said, aloud, "It used to be I could look in your face for forgiveness, but there's nothing there now."

She knew she had to get a job and hire someone to look after him, to be his babysitter. She also knew she wouldn't leave him. The house was paid for, and because Roy had worked in insurance they would be decently compensated.



"One side looks shorter than the other, don't you think?"

She buttoned her husband's pants over the fresh diaper; then, recalling a joke Roy had adored, Kay draped his bedsheet over her head and whispered, "I am my mother's ghost."

BACK downstairs, Kay continued to watch Larry Seitz; he was lying on his stomach now. Kay felt serene again. The dining room was the only room in the house that she didn't wish to redecorate. The walls were clean white, the furniture old, inexpensive, and simple. It infuriated Kay that the rest of the house made her feel she had stumbled upon someone else's bad taste. Was I blind? she'd wonder. Was there a gun to my head? She couldn't remember where she'd bought any of her furniture.

But maybe, she'd speculate, these surroundings are appropriate for entertaining my neighbors. Maybe my sofas and tables and lamps make them feel at home. During the infrequent drinking parties that Kay and Roy would host, Kay noticed a swelling mean-spiritedness in herself, an inability to listen to the chat that, predictably, would include nuggets of undigested press fodder—sad trivia concerning "Batman" 's gross, Lyn Nofziger's good fortune, Exxon's imperviousness to prosecution.

Now she was in a sort of reverie, her arms locked against the nervous spasms that sometimes ended her Larry-watches. He was so pretty. And though she knew that in the long run his life would probably be no more interesting or significant or full of beautiful moments than her own, now she still envied him his lack of responsibility, his physical charms, his unambitious summer of ease.

The little Hohenadels, Ginny and Paul, had been standing on the edge of Larry's lawn since Kay resumed her watch. Apparently they'd been biding their time, waiting for Larry to fall asleep, because now they were aiming and tossing gravel at his back. Kay watched with delighted terror as, startled awake and uncertain of the nature of the threat, Larry pressed himself upright, crossed his arms so that his forearms were tucked just beneath his plump chest, and swaggered menacingly toward the Hohenadels.

THE next morning Kay got a phone call in response to the ad for a sitter she'd been running in the local paper. She was so optimistic about the girl, who was well-mannered, finishing up her physics degree at Millersville University, and, most promisingly, a Mennonite, that she immediately started calling about some jobs for herself. That afternoon she got a sister-in-law to sit with Roy, then had an interview and was hired at B.E.O., a small clothing shop just outside Lancaster that specialized in fine designer knockoffs. Kay was going to run the haphazardly arranged store alone, answering only to the owner, Bonnie Ellen Oshar.

The babysitter's name was Sara Kauffer, and she arrived at the house with twenty minutes to spare the following Monday, which was Kay's first day on the job. Sara was barely five feet tall and somewhat gaunt. She had a wide, indefinite chin and lovely yellow hair in an unfashionable cut that reassured Kay. She wore a white jersey minidress and tiny black sneakers without laces.

They settled in the kitchen after a brief house tour. The preliminaries concerning Roy's care and Sara's pay had been arranged during the phone interview. Sara seemed humble suddenly, as she paused beside the sink.

Kay said, cheerily, "Tell me what's on your mind."

"I was thinking," Sara said, "unless it bothers you, that to keep me busy I'd clean around the house and cook some little dinner something for you and your husband." As she spoke, she punctuated with her forearms, looking, Kay suddenly decided, like a parody of a rapper.

"Sara, that's sweet," Kay said firmly. "My situation is bad. There's no reason on earth that I'd object to your kindness, but I'm not in a position to give you more money."

Sara perked up and pointed at the refrigerator. "May I?"

Kay nodded. "Don't be like this. Please. Open the refrigerator. Feel free to toss anything that's rotten. I don't keep up real well. My biggest problem is dried-up fruit."

Sara was head and shoulders in the freezer.

"What *is* in there?" Kay asked.

Sara, on tiptoe, looked over her shoulder at Kay. "Well," she said seriously. "There's some frozen calzones, spinach, chicken hot dogs, chocolate ice cream, applesauce, and a big bottle of Xanax pills."

"I was surprised at how well that Xanax worked. It makes Roy manageable. The fact that a tranquillizer helps him is unsettling to me, though. I read about nursing homes and how the residents are overmedicated, and I come to the conclusion that I'm just his caretaker now. But when I stop giving him the pills he seems worse. I don't know if I'm maybe blocking his recovery."

"My mom's aunt had Alzheimer's disease," Sara said. She was running water into the sink, using a fork to push wilted green beans down the disposal. "One Thanksgiving we lucked out and everyone could make it, the whole family. We'd just called them all into the dining room. The table was set. So, anyway, Aunt Ruth marches into the room and she's got a real determined look on her face. She picks up the basket of hot rolls, goes through the French doors onto the back porch, and starts chucking the rolls to the birds. It was *so* funny, and we couldn't help laughing. Then Mom's brother gave Aunt Ruth something and she just seemed stunned. It ruined the holiday for me."

"I have to go," Kay said, grabbing her keys from the table. She didn't know why it bothered her that Sara had told her this story. She thought that perhaps it was the urgency in Sara's voice. Kay could imagine a string of obsessive friendships in Sara's past, the kind that ended with Sara's whereabouts reported via an informal hot line of skittish women who no longer answered her calls.

"Then go to work, Kay."

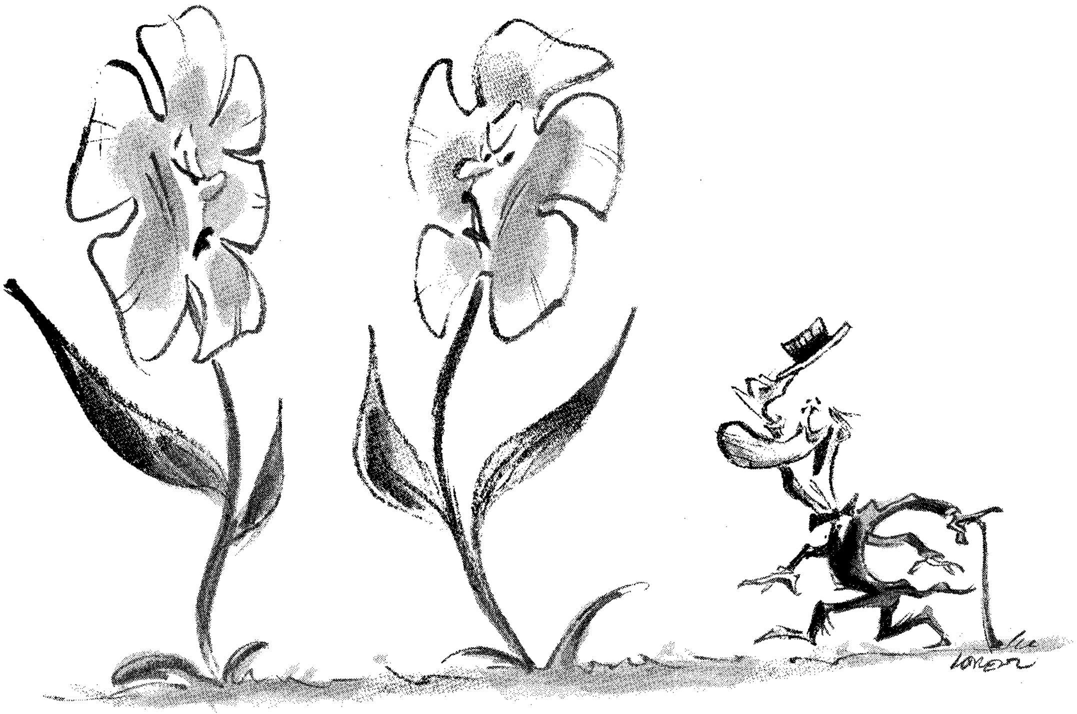
"I'll phone you over lunch," Kay called on her way out the door.

"Whatever," Sara chirped, arranging a stack of books, a yellow legal pad, and a glass of club soda at the kitchen table.

THE store was a two-room affair. It took up the first floor of a skinny row house just outside town. There were seven circular clothes racks in the back room. In the front room, there was a black metal desk on which sat a primitive adding machine, a gray steel cashbox, a black dial phone, stacks of magazines, and a staple gun. There were figurines on the desk, too—cheerful, anthropomorphic shapes made of plastic disguised as wood. Kay wondered when the figurines, which she thought resembled melting candles, had been a fad.

The owner, Mrs. Oshar, wore very expensive clothes, which the store didn't stock. Her face reminded Kay of a big noodle. Kay could imagine Mrs. Oshar referring to the store with bemused disdain when she was with her friends. She will probably make up a nickname for me, Kay thought. Her friends will hear all about me; I'll be a running joke.

All morning, Mrs.



"Oh, Lord! Here comes that common garden pest again!"

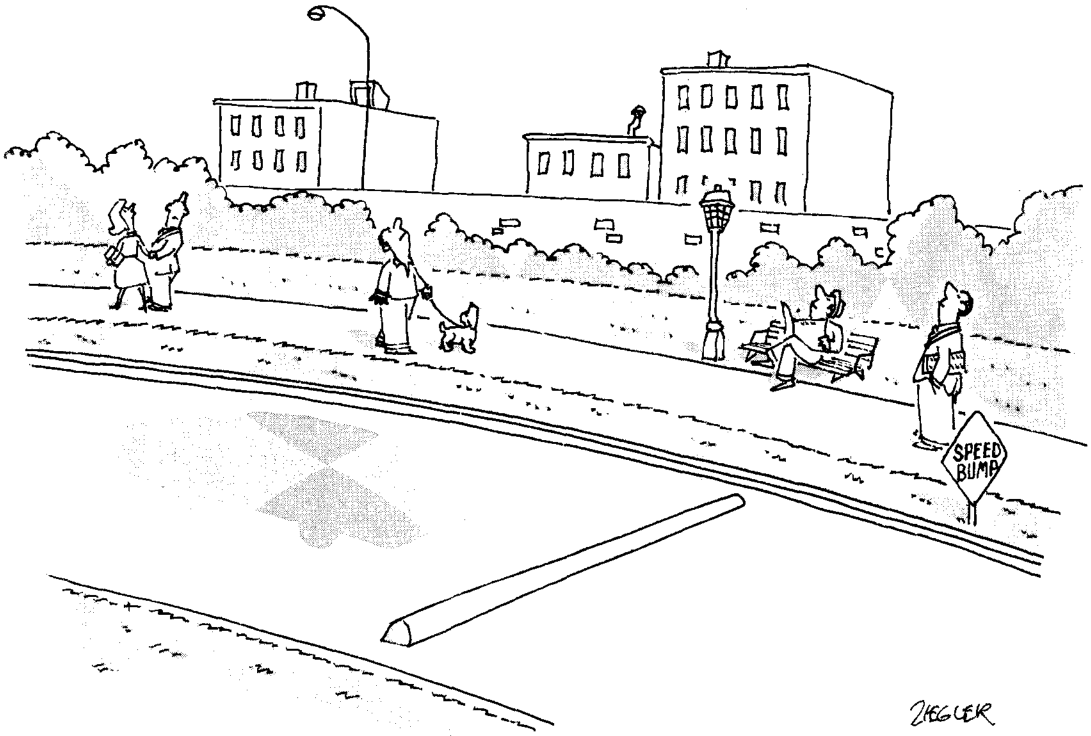
Oshar showed Kay ad layouts, inventory sheets, order forms, and old clippings about the store's opening and subsequent events there. In the clippings, Mrs. Oshar looked unnaturally glamorous, the kind of woman who'd inspire Kay to mumble, behind her back, "Who *are* you?" Mrs. Oshar droned on, and when she finished telling Kay about a list of rules and standards she asked her to sign it.

"This is so melodramatic," Kay said, trying to strike the right note of familiar good humor.

"Indeed," Mrs. Oshar said happily.

After lunch, Mrs. Oshar told Kay that she was a great find, adding, "You don't know how lucky I feel." A little later, she left for the day, so Kay was in charge.

Immediately, Kay sat down at the desk and called home. There was no answer. If somehow they are both dead, she thought, I will quit this job and move to Cairns, fucking Australia, where I'll dive the Great Barrier Reef and live secretively among a small, carefree community who will intrigue me, accept me, and defend me when my name is disparaged by outsiders. Kay pushed her shoes off and sat at the desk, watching the door, almost daring a customer to enter.



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SARA spent the morning solving equations and keeping an eye on Roy, who was watching television in the living room. She fixed tuna salad and squeezed lemon juice over apple slices for lunch, calling Roy into the kitchen. He ate noiselessly with her, and went back to the television. Sara cleaned up, then went upstairs and looked through Kay's drawers and closets. She read letters she found in a shoebox beneath Kay's bed. The doorbell rang while she was reading a heartfelt letter of thanks from a friend for whom Kay had performed an unspecified act of kindness. It was written on the stationery of a bankrupt trucking company whose logo, the red cab of an eighteen-wheeler circumscribed by a blue oval, was strangely familiar to Sara and nearly brought her to tears. Sara put the letter away and went downstairs.

"Can't you get the door, honey?" she called to Roy, and then giggled to herself.

It was Larry Seitz, leaning into the doorjamb. He wore cutoff pajama bottoms, a white T-shirt, and a floral-printed cap cut like Jughead's crown. "Hey," he said, "I'm Larry Seitz, from up the street. I saw you come here this morning. When you didn't leave I wondered if you were related to Kay and Roy or something. I was afraid there might be something going on."

"No," Sara said. "I'm working for them."

"You're the cleaning lady?"

"I look after Roy." Sara felt deliriously tiny; she thought Larry was immense. She compared his legs with her legs and his arms with her arms. She estimated where the knobs of her shoulders would fit into his back if they pressed against one another. She imagined her face buried just above his stomach. She thought of him on top of her: she couldn't budge him and his weight would nearly suffocate her.

Larry backed away from the door, feigning disbelief. "Kay got a job? What news."

"Yes," Sara said.

"Uh—where?"

"Should I tell you?"

"I live right over there!" Larry pointed to his house. "Kay knows me. Roy used to help me with my car."

"Oh, he did? That breaks my heart. He doesn't do a whole lot now. He watches television."

Larry leaned into the doorway and put his arm around Sara's shoulders. "I don't think he's going to stay this way. It's just a feeling I have."

"No, Larry." Sara shook his arm away.

"I'm sorry. Hey, we'll take him for a walk this afternoon. I'm gonna go train for a couple hours at the high school, but then I'm free until tonight. I'm picking up some shifts tending bar at the country club."

"What are you training for?"

"The tri-ath-lon!"

Roy came to the door, looked blankly at Larry, and began to cry.

"Hey, there's the guy, there's the guy," Larry said, putting his hand on Roy's shoulder.

Sara watched, skeptical of Larry. Right then she was tired of relationships and the discussions and books that accompanied their dissolution. She'd been overweight for many years, and had almost married a lovely overweight man. Following their breakup, she lost thirty pounds and became promiscuous. She slept with Bobby Lan, who, when they were in bed, pointed excitedly to his penis and said, "Look at it; isn't it big?" (And it was—it was the biggest Sara had ever seen. It was so big, Sara joked to her friend Trina, that she'd hold it beside her face as if it were a telephone.) She slept with two of Bobby Lan's friends. And, just before she began working for Kay, Sara had broken things off with an older man who liked to pretend that he admired a particular song, book, television show, or movie so much that he couldn't remain in bed with Sara if she wasn't convinced of its worth. He was relentless; he could talk for a straight hour about a new Doobie Brothers song. Sara would finally say, more or less, that she understood why he admired the work even though she didn't share the sentiment. Then he'd laugh like she'd never seen a healthy man laugh before, and he'd cynically sing the song he'd been pretending to adore: "Music is the doctor . . ."

Larry got Roy to stop crying, so Sara asked him where they'd go for their walk.

"The woods," Larry said. "Nature! Wear something sturdy."

"I'll wear what I'm wearing. Jeez—you think I brought a wardrobe or something?"

Larry was first down the path, followed by Sara, who was careful to hold stray branches so they didn't snap in Roy's face. She guided Roy, indicating with gentle commands and careful steps which flat rock or dirt-packed plateau he should trust.

Larry stopped occasionally to glare at paper trash his neighbors had allowed to blow into the woods from their back yards. "Everyone's so lazy," he said, pointing at some newspapers that were caught on high tree branches.

"I know," Sara said. "They only worry about their neat yards. Once people live in a house and keep all of their things there, they act like they've won something, like they now have an excuse for living. You mention something that would be a much more valuable way for them to spend their time, and you get this look from them, like, 'You may think so, young lady, but I'm the one with a house.' It's like—who cares about your disgusting house?"

"Yeah, maybe," Larry said, looking puzzled.

Roy was used to the path, so they picked up speed. Larry and Sara played a game in which Larry would stop abruptly and Sara, pretending not to notice, would stumble into him. At the bottom of the path, they stopped, and didn't cross the log that had fallen across the creek. Instead, they continued playing. Sara pretended that Roy was her protector. She hid behind him, peeking over his shoulder at Larry, who eventually went to sit on the log, dangling his legs above the creek, and waiting for Sara to join him and give him her undivided attention.

Kay was waiting gratefully in her quiet kitchen. She'd eaten some of the large salad Sara had made for her. Sara had left a note that said, "Thought you might like to be alone after your first big day! Love, Sara and Roy." Kay felt nervous, though; she dreaded the inevitable moment when the door would slam and her husband would walk past her to the television, not noticing her presence. She looked at the black drop-waisted dress she'd bought with her discount at the store, and thought about the other things she'd probably buy.

She went upstairs and washed her face, then applied a facial mask. She took a hot, long bath and washed her hair before going back downstairs.

It was almost dark when they got home. Sara waved to Larry, who was on his front step, and then she and Roy came inside.

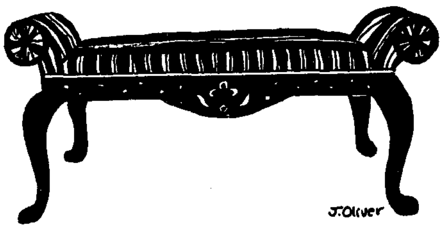
"He's exhausted, and so am I," Sara said to Kay, who was waiting in the kitchen.

"That's wonderful," Kay said. She was delighted that Roy was tired. She pictured a night of uninterrupted sleep—no late-night noises coming from his room, no crying or pounding doors.

Roy slumped upstairs to his room.

"I'll go up and remind him to brush his teeth," Kay said.

"Before you do," Sara said, "I have got to ask you something. See, I'm staying over tonight at your neighbor's, at Larry's."



"Well, I'm not your mother, Sara," Kay said. Something about this turn of events pleased her.

"I'm not asking for your approval," Sara said cautiously.

"Oh. Well, you're not going to abandon me, are you? Isn't the money enough? You know I can't offer more."

"The money's fine. I'm committed." Sara took a deep breath. "I really just wanna know if I can borrow a T-shirt and a clean pair of underwear."

"Oh, God," Kay said. "What a relief!"

Without another word, she went upstairs to her bedroom, where she took from her top dresser drawer a glossy black shopping bag she'd saved from a long-ago trip to the Bloomingdale's at the King of Prussia mall. There was a pair of gift underpants she'd never worn in the same drawer. The kids had given her these strange, plain panties one Christmas; the tags were still on them. Then she saw the gray Calvin Klein T-shirt her daughter had always borrowed. Kay put the underthings in the bag and took it to her vanity, where she decided to pack a lace handkerchief, a box of lilac-scented soap, and a sample bottle of clear shampoo.

"Kay?" Sara called from downstairs. "Hey, if you can't find something, don't worry about it. I'm feeling pretty sleepy. I think I might go home."

"No, dear," Kay said, hurrying to the staircase. "I'm coming right down."

She was embarrassed, a little, by this overnight bag she'd prepared, but wasn't her son always telling her on the phone that her solicitousness made him happy? She suddenly felt a ferocious affection for Sara, and she stepped quickly down the stairs, wondering what she could safely say to her new young friend.

Sara was sitting, head bowed, in the kitchen. The house was dark save for the country-theme lamp that hung a few feet above the table. Sara would realize, Kay hoped, that it had been many months since this room was a nighttime place where people who cared for one another met, talked, and made excuses to linger.

—Ben Neihart

PROFILES

THE TIRESIAS FACTOR

WHAT choreographer enjoys the unique distinction of having been a prima ballerina? The answer is not Nijinska; it is Peter Anastos. For three years, from 1975 to 1978, Anastos danced principal ballerina roles for the all-male travesty company known as Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo. He danced the classical repertory—"Swan Lake" and "Giselle" and "Les Sylphides"—and he danced it on point. He was also the star of ballets satirizing modern masters, the best known being "Go for Barocco" (Balanchine) and "Yes, Virginia, Another Piano Ballet" (Robbins). Anastos devised the choreography for these works himself; along with his vigilantly authentic productions of the classics (Kirov teachers and coaches were hired to rehearse them), they became the foundation of the Trockadero repertory and are toured to this day.

When Anastos left the Trockadero, it was to put what he had learned as a parodist to work on serious choreography. He became a free-lance choreographer, which in the world of ballet is almost as much an anomaly as a ballerina-choreographer, and he floated about the country, turning out work for any company that would have him. Besides ballets, he staged dances for television shows and opera companies. He won fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and one from the Guggenheim Foundation. But, by and large, these were years of relative obscurity, spent perfecting his craft. In 1982, Mikhail Baryshnikov, a Trockadero fan, hired Anastos for what was to be the first of several collaborations, a TV special called "Baryshnikov in Hollywood." The two men choreographed Prokofiev's "Cinderella" for American Ballet Theatre—the only original full-length ballet in the company's history. It was a box-office hit, but critical opinion was divided. Anastos and Baryshnikov were to have danced the roles of the Ugly Sisters. This never happened, and the ballet withered away, along with Anastos's career at A.B.T. He returned to his nomadic life: Atlanta, Cincinnati, Dallas, Milwaukee, Nashville, Omaha, San Antonio, Tulsa Ballet Theatre, Ballet Oklahoma, Pennsylvania Ballet. The closest he came to New York City, his home, was Garden State Ballet, a small, meagrely funded company based in Newark. He made a number of successful pieces there, and in 1987 he became the artistic director.

A few weeks before last Christmas, I went to Newark to watch the dancers rehearse Anastos's production of "The Nutcracker." Following Balanchine (who followed the original Russian version, of 1892), Anastos casts children in the children's roles, but he goes Balanchine one better in the principal female roles: there are three—a Sugarplum, a Dew Drop, and a Snow Queen. Each role contains sensitive, musical choreography, with sparkling passages on toe. It's unusual these days to find a male choreographer so adept at making dances for women, particularly the highly specialized dances that ballerinas are trained to execute, and I wondered what Anastos's dancers had to say about this ability of his.

Ballerinas in Newark are the same as ballerinas in New York or Paris or Moscow: choreographers exist to serve them. Yes, Peter *was* unusually good with ballerinas, admitted the Snow Queen. She thought a moment, then airily fluffed her tutu. "After all, he was one himself."

The Tiresias factor, based on the proposition that females have more fun, surfaces every so often as a reminder that, brilliant male contributions notwithstanding, ballet is primarily a woman's art. In the last years of the Second Empire, Paris audiences grew so jealously fond of the Opéra's danseuses that male dancers were all but banned from the stage; principal male roles, including those in Delibes's two masterpieces, "Coppélia" and "Sylvia," had to be danced *en travesti*. The late Frederick Ashton, who choreographed for three generations of English dancers, once actually made the mythical Tiresias the hero-heroine of a ballet, and he not infrequently undertook travesty roles himself. Ashton's greatest star, Margot Fonteyn, was the inspiration for "Olga Tchikaboumskaya," the guise in which Anastos danced his Trockadero roles. At least, that is what Anastos claims; to all appearances, there was as much Milton Berle as Margot Fonteyn in Tchikaboumskaya. Some of the Trockadero dancers were content to flaunt their fantasies of being ballerinas; they didn't care whether you laughed or not. Anastos did care; he was out to get laughs. Olga was a study in contrasts: dovelike reticence and manic vivacity; bone-chilling nonchalance and fiendish caprice. The one thing Anastos wasn't was a spitfire. Despite the flash of Carmen Miranda in the name Tchikaboumskaya, he was cool, militant yet demure—the embodiment of classical ballerina temperament. And yet who knew what passions would erupt beneath that ladylike exterior? Or when?

With the Trockadero under Anastos's artistic direction, audiences were prepared for anything. The evening typically opened with a loudspeaker message: "Mme. Tchikaboumskaya wishes to announce that she is in a *very* good mood tonight." A moment later, the curtain would rise on "Swan Lake," and Anastos, befeathered and befrilled, would appear, pick his way across the stage, size up his partner (the incomparably wan Natch Taylor) with dainty circumspection, then topple into his arms like a felled tree. After a no-holds-barred adagio, Anastos would essay the Swan Queen's solo variation, wrists decorously crossed, knees boggling, each lurching sissonne perfectly timed to the music. The performance was a compendium of prima-ballerina mannerisms, from the bent and broken to the proud and preening, and it reached its peak in the bows, which were an extended ritual in keeping with then standard Royal Ballet/American Ballet Theatre practice. Presented with a potted geranium, Tchikaboumskaya would remove the flower, sniff it languidly, and pass the pot to Taylor. In "Cheopsiana," a sendup of Diaghilev's Egyptian numbers, Anastos had himself brought onstage as a mummy and ceremoniously unwound from his veils, like Ida Rubinstein, the haughty heroine of "Cléopâtre." As Marie Taglioni in "Pas de Quatre," he touchingly defended the dignity of the aging ballerina. In "Yes, Virginia, Another Piano Ballet," he was a shy, gauzy, Chopin-swept creature whose main concern was to keep from winding up under the piano. It was the funniest of his performances, and one of the two or three funniest dance performances I've ever seen.

The man behind the ballerina was, and remains, a remarkably harmless, anonymous-looking person, whose only androgynous characteristic is a mischievous crooked grin, boyish or Bea Lillie-ish, as befits the occasion. But for his glowing good health, Anastos could be called mousy. Medium-tall, medium-thin, with fair skin and receding red hair, he has an almost faceless face, the kind one might expect to find under a surgeon's cap or above a clerical collar. A pair of nerd-classic rimless eyeglasses adds the final touch of nonentity. Whether it's because of those glasses (the kind he favors even have eyebrow bands), the mild blue gaze that shines through them, or the guileless, slightly awkward social manner, most people meeting Anastos for the first time are thrown way off his scent. Actually, he is a tough-minded, hip New Yorker, breezy, voluble, and opinionated as only intellectual autodidacts can be. With little in the way of formal education, he is extremely knowledgeable about politics, sociology, history (especially cultural history), musicology, Oriental rugs. The average dancer knows nothing of ballet history; Anastos is an authority. But then the average dancer is something that Peter Anastos never was. He doesn't look like one or walk like one (he tends to shamble), and, in fact, he almost wasn't a dancer at all. His entry into the profession was largely fortuitous, and his exact standing within it is somewhat vague. To certain of his peers he is a rank upstart who is trying to parlay a marginal exploit, drag ballet, into a full-scale career as a bona-fide choreographer. It's true that Anastos cannot claim to have undergone long years of training, and that except for three brief seasons with the very minor-league Schenectady Civic Ballet he has never performed with any company but the Trockadero—never, that is, performed as a male dancer. Still, one might suppose that a self-starter like Anastos could make up in productivity what he lacks in credentials, for few choreographers of his generation have been more prolific and none have been more reliable. In a little over ten years, he has produced, for eighteen different companies, thirty-four ballets, over half of which remain in repertory. Nothing about these bal-

THE END OF THE AFFAIR

I.

It may have been what she wanted all along:
An episode in a foreign film, Swedish or French,
Where the laconic man and woman in the hotel lobby
Have their last chance to act nobly, stoically,
Before they are separated by the fortunes of war,
And each forgives the other, and neither is to blame.

Or it may have been what she wanted all along:
The intoxication of paranoia, where the suspicion is mutual,
And she doesn't know what he does for a living,
And he knows that her last two lovers died violent deaths.
It was like the rush of inspiration that only a nervous breakdown
Can give you: she looked at the roses and burst into tears.

II.

It was as if she had brewed a supremely powerful pot of coffee
For breakfast, and he watched as it transported her
To Paris and the smell of bakeries in May, and she watched
As he went back to the day he noticed something different
About his wife, her hair or a new silk scarf she was wearing,
That made him realize she was having an affair. It was almost

Like being inside a snow-filled paperweight, which someone shakes:
It was snowing, he won't forget, and she told him
He made her feel beautiful in the snow, and what he wanted
Was what he thought he wanted—delight in the body
Sleeping next to his, the curve of her back, the barrette
That fell out of her hair as she slept.

—David Lehman

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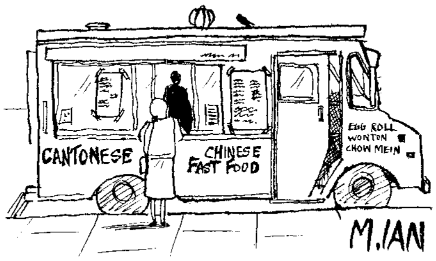
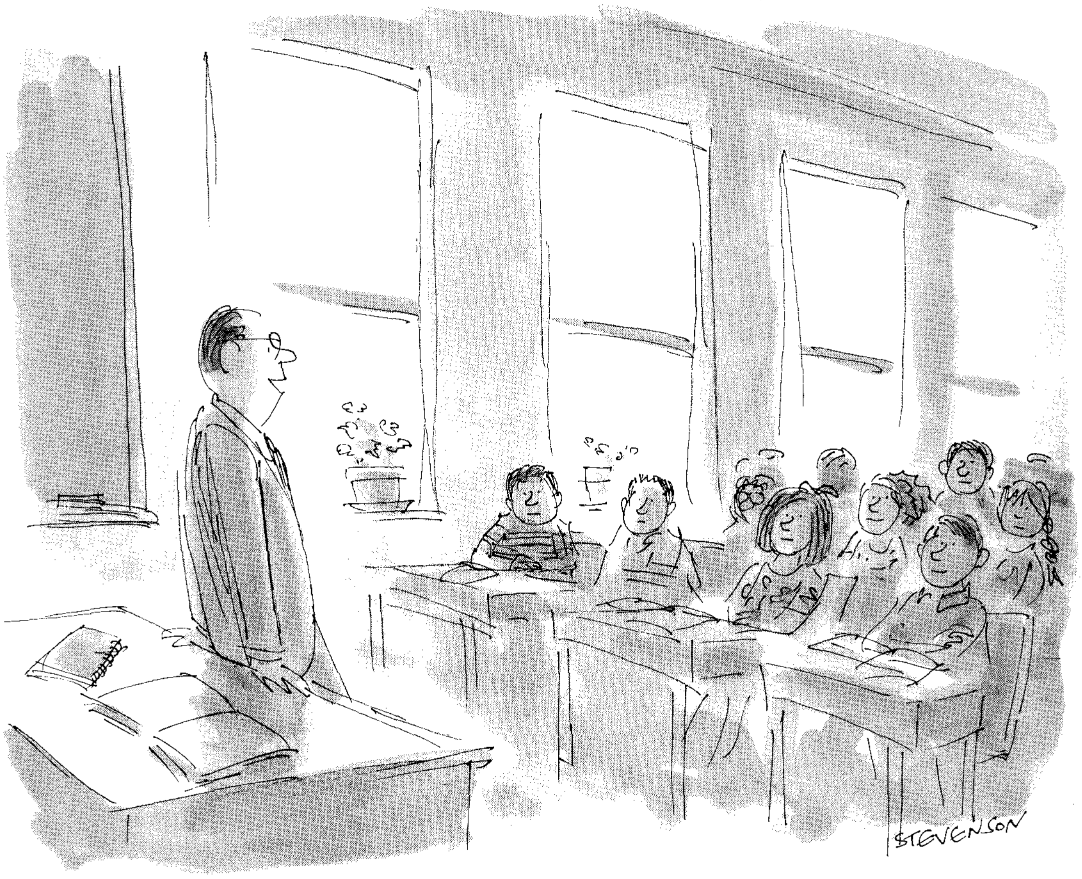


lets suggests that their maker once danced top banana in a travesty company; if anything, they reveal him to be a sober and dedicated traditionalist. Yet Anastos is still knocking at the door of the ballet establishment. He turns out quantities of work for other people's companies, a welcome guest who is never invited to move in. As the director of a small, struggling company, he makes do with painfully restricted performance schedules, borrowed scenery and costumes, and, worst of all for a music-minded choreographer, no orchestra. Anastos is normally a cheerful soul, but occasionally he gets to sounding like the Flying Dutchman or the Man Without a Country. "I'm unemployable in my own town," he groans. "New York can be very unforgiving." To be employable in Tulsa but not New York is the next-worst thing to being a pariah. The way Anastos sees it, what New York can't forgive comes down to two things: (1) lack of pedigree; (2) timing.



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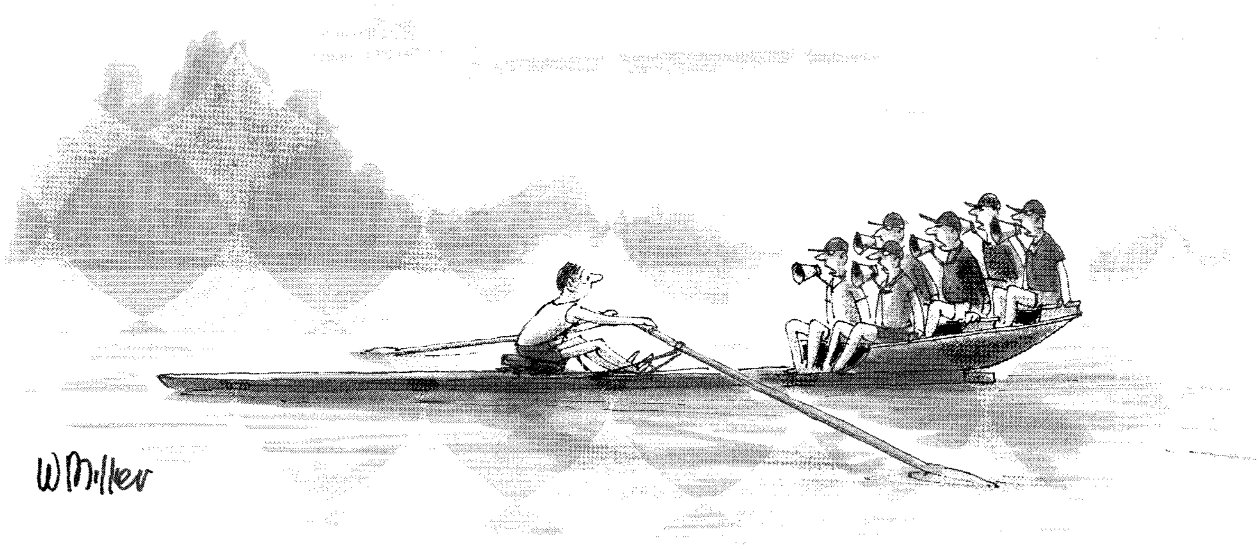
AS the Trockadero's Master of Revels, he began smashing idols and overturning proprieties just when ballet in this country was seeing its greatest period of growth. The Trockadero was, in fact, a beneficiary of that period. But from the public-relations viewpoint of ballet's conservatives Anastos couldn't have come along at a worse time. Ever since the thirties, big-time promoters had been cultivating the American audience with a sales pitch linking ballet's acceptability to the masculinity of its male dancers. The Trockadero took forty years' worth of P.R. and tossed it to the winds. The company's success, which at the time appeared to be part of the vaunted "sexual revolution," was perhaps a signal that campaigns based on masculinity were outmoded. But the Trockadero sent out many signals; it was a more complex phenomenon than it was taken for at the time, or than it is now.

Today's Trockadero is a collegiate romp through the repertory. The original company kept its mania more tightly focussed. In "The Lisbon Traviata," Terrence McNally's recent hit play, there comes a moment when one of the opera queens the play is about pulls a shawl over his head and begins piping coloratura—and he's completely serious. The Trockadero used to have that kind of screws-loose seriousness; from depths of thwarted passion it profaned high art. Now a full-time touring company (it returned last February for its first local engagement in seven years), in Anastos's day it was explicitly a New York event. Even while its gift for slapstick made it a Broadway attraction, it was the darling of the dance intellectuals. Like all forms of parody, it operated from a critical premise. Its Balanchine takeoff spoofed the Master's mathematical refinement; its assault on Robbins burlesqued the wistful, we're-just-folks camaraderie of "Dances at a Gathering." (Anastos here did to Robbins what Robbins did to Chopin in "The Concert.") In "Swan Lake" and the other classics, it pretended that females have more fun because they have more nerve—they go up on point, demand to be lifted and carried, hog the spotlight, take all the flowers. But it wasn't only ballerinas the Trockadero dancers were mocking; it was themselves—male dancers in a prolonged snit at not having been born female. Anastos says that each member of the audience made up his mind what to laugh at in a Trockadero performance. For some people drag ballet stirred up sexual anxiety, which they could then hoot down; for others it was a refreshing experience. The company was identified with the advent of a new maturity in our dance culture. If ballerinamanes could parade their obsessions to the extent of getting themselves up in swan feathers and knocking each other off point, then maybe ballet really was safe in America—safe from the demeaning assurances of the P.R. experts that it was composed entirely of pretty girls and he-men. But then the question became: What, exactly, was it composed of? The mixed reaction to the company also included bewilderment. Here were men impersonating women, and going to excruciating lengths to do



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so. What on earth did the "woman" want?

Sexual politics in ballet are the reverse of those in real life. Male dancers wage a struggle for equal rights, sometimes with little regard for form. During the years of the Trockadero's greatest popularity, Nureyev, then the reigning box-office champion, was in his performances of the classics taking over more and more of the woman's function, making the Prince into the central character, appropriating music and even elements of dance style associated with the ballerina. Other male dancers followed his example. This wasn't the way to male liberation in ballet, and neither was the Trockadero. But by making effeminacy into the whole point the Trocks did more than present a comic spectacle; they defined an issue. They exposed the crux of male envy. They incarnated the urge to become that powerful female icon the ballerina. In psychoanalytic terms, they were the Jungian version of the Tiresias factor, while Nureyev was the Freudian version.

It's possible that the Trockadero attack on the masculinity issue wouldn't have succeeded nearly so well without Nureyev there to undermine it in the first place. And Nureyev might not have undermined it but for his need to satisfy ever more unreasonable box-office demands. The point is debatable. Nureyev in his very first New York season with the Royal Ballet—the spring, 1963, season—excited controversy and outrage over his appearances in the classics. John Martin, the *Times* critic, referred to "repellent personal mannerisms," and characterized him as "a disintegrating force—to the company, to the works in which he appears, to his own talent." In "Giselle" and "Swan Lake," Martin wrote, "he has been allowed so to shift the emphasis that they become virtually his own production. It is not so much that he remakes them as that he unmakes them, destroying by the extravagances of his personal manner all unity of form and style, and putting in bits and pieces from other productions he has known in a rather pathetic effort to give himself all the plums. When he makes his first entrance in 'Giselle' with a half-bale of mouse-colored hair worn partly à la Bardot and partly à la schnauzer, one has the shocked illusion that here for the first time Albrecht is being played *en travesti*. The illusion is fortified as the action progresses and his palm-leaf hands describe continuous Spencerian flourishes in the air, briefly resting their fronds from time to time on one collarbone or the other." When Nureyev partners Fonteyn, he "is always essentially in competition with the ballerina. He is continually nosing in; when, for example, Fonteyn in a supported position raises her arm, he raises his arm behind her even higher with the palm-leaf waving."

All this is malicious enough, though with a grain of accuracy. Nureyev's trespasses were pretty bad and would get worse. But what seems to anger Martin is not just the performances; it's the dancer himself—his whole personal style, on and off the stage. With a recklessness that rivals the very thing he accuses Nureyev of, he casts suspicion on the motives for Nureyev's defection, comparing him with Genghis Khan: "He moves in and takes what he wants." And get this: Nureyev is not even a box-office draw. "The only time he has appeared in a performance without the genuinely magic Dame Margot Fonteyn, the theatre was far from full." Well, if it wasn't full it was not the fault of the ballet fans. The 1963 season was the first and last time that the New York ballet world had Nureyev pretty much to itself. Not only had a prolonged newspaper strike cut deep into the Royal's advance sale (a fact that Martin acknowledges) but, more important, the Hurok office, out of fear of offending the Soviet authorities, had put off its publicity campaign on Nureyev's behalf. When, in 1965, the campaign was launched, Nureyev

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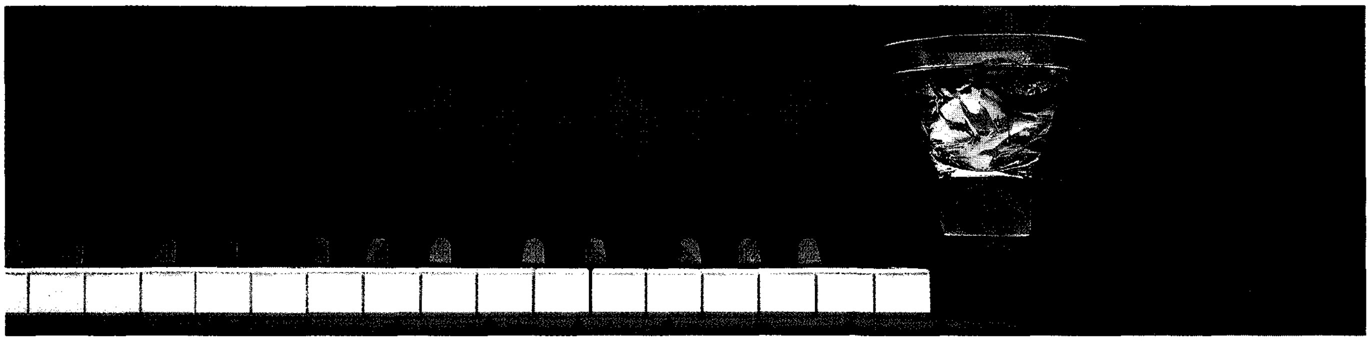

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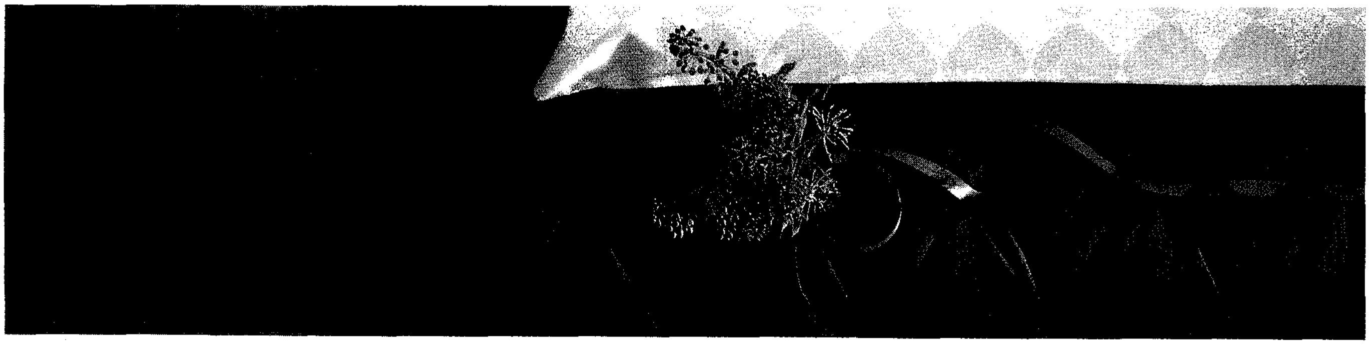

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became a household name and his partnership with Fonteyn a legend. A decade later, he was having to fill houses on his own, not only without Fonteyn or a reasonable substitute but without the Royal Ballet, and it was then that his aggrandizing ways in the classics became truly excessive.

"The Sleeping Beauty" is not a male vehicle; lacking vehicles of his own, Nureyev made it one, or tried to. He acted not entirely out of self-interest. A tendency to glorify the male role is something Nureyev would have inherited. The Soviet view of ballet, fundamentally anti-classical, exalts "realism" and tilts the gender balance to reflect society. Women's roles are stereotypes. Given that some truly superb male dancers have made this view defensible, and that one of them, the greatest of all, was running A.B.T. at the time, a Soviet-style production of "Cinderella" would seem to have been inevitable. And, in fact, the A.B.T. "Cinderella" never really broke loose from the Soviet aesthetic. Though Anastos did his best to free the heroine's character of clichés, she was eclipsed by the Prince. The Soviet ballerina, from Ulanova to Makarova and beyond, has functioned best as a custodian of the nineteenth-century classics, and even there she is hemmed in by revisionist thinking. In the twentieth century, no one has done more to extend the ballerina's inheritance than Balanchine. But though he created great roles for male as well as for female dancers, *none* of his stars ever quite succeeded in capturing the American public the way the two glamorous Soviet defectors Nureyev and Baryshnikov did, dancing the classics. In the case of Nureyev and his followers—Anthony Dowell, Fernando Bujones, even Erik Bruhn, who overhauled his style considerably under Nureyev's influence—what the public was encouraged to see and believe in was something largely imaginary: a classical canon in which male dancing assumed pride of place. Ballet as a business flourished as never before, but the business had little to do with ballet as an art. The ballet bubble that finally burst in the eighties had been absurdly overinflated and distorted by misappropriation in the name of male suffrage. Today, the business is having to reckon with the falsity of its premise. With both Balanchine and Ashton dead, the classical tradition as these men perceived it is seen to be in crisis. And the classics—"The Sleeping Beauty," "Swan Lake," "La Bayadère," "Raymonda"—have yet to recover. Marius Petipa, looking down from his celestial cloud bank upon the ballets he created a hundred years ago, may well be pounding his cane and demanding to know why, if the man is supposed to be the star, all of them evoke the woman in the title. "Giselle" is danced today as if it were "Albrecht" even by Baryshnikov, who does not make a habit of competing with the ballerina.

If ballet as an art is dependent on the primacy of the ballerina, though, it is not because Petipa said so; neither is it for social or political reasons. It is because the technique allows women greater flexibility, precision, and breadth of expression. In a penetrating essay written in 1925, "The Spirit of the Classic Dance," the Russian critic André Levinson recounts the historical process by which ballet became the art we know. Men and women alike turned their legs out; men and women rose on

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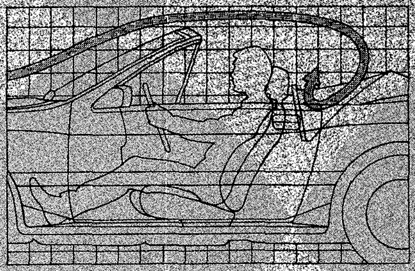


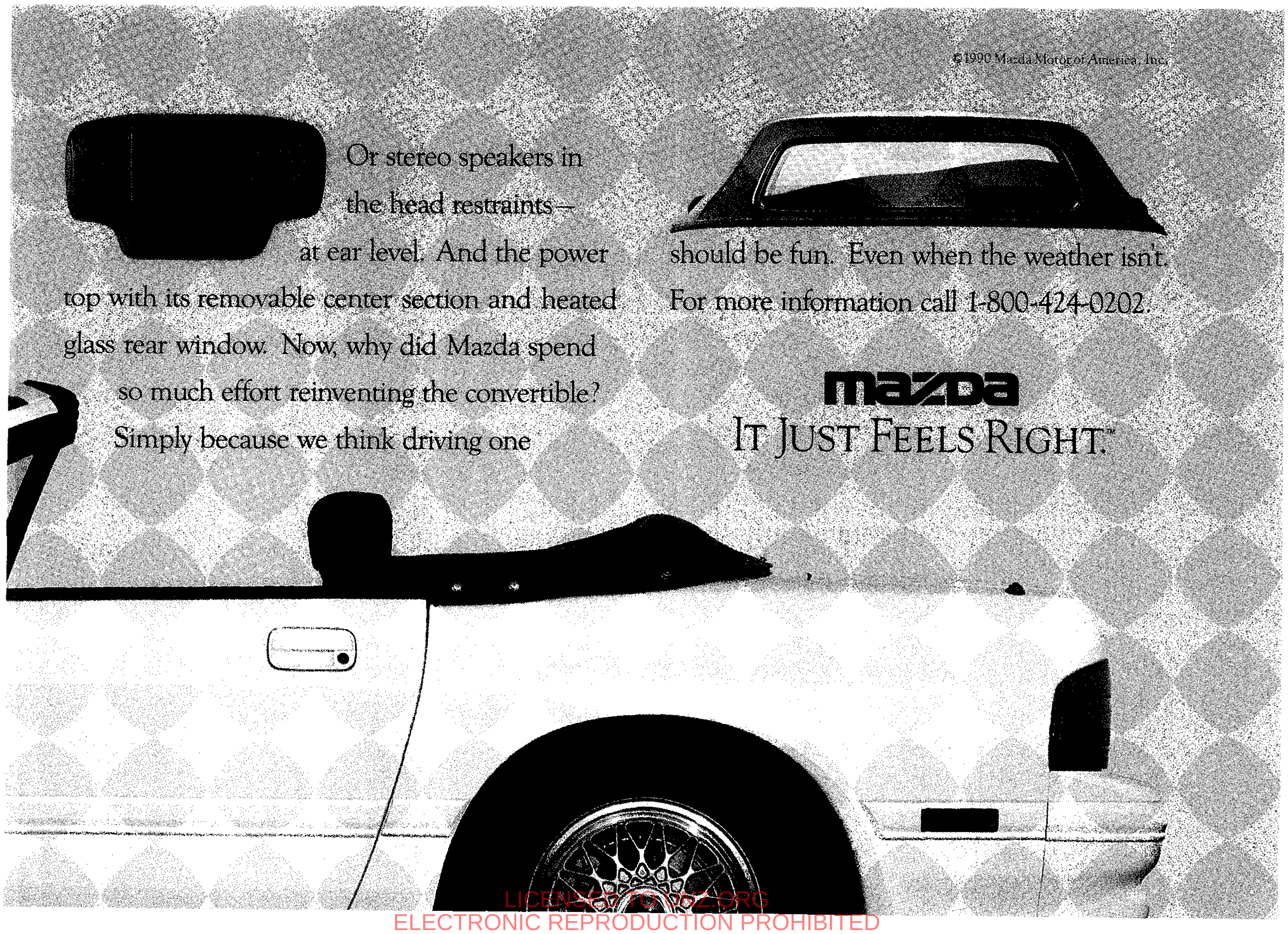
their toes. Then, sometime during the Romantic period, after fifty years of experimentation and gradual reform, women began to dance, with arched insteps, on the very *tips* of their toes. Did the technique embody or did it incite the idea of Romantic aspiration? Levinson doesn't answer this question, but he does give a spiritual emphasis to his description of turnout: "The whole region of the dancer's being, body and soul, is dilated." And he defines pointwork as something that followed logically from the stretched, turned-out foot. "What happened was that the foot simply refused to remain flat any longer. It strove to lengthen out the vertical lines of its structure. It gave up its natural method of functioning to further an aesthetic end. And thus it is that when a dancer rises on her points, she breaks away from the exigencies of everyday life, and enters into an enchanted country—that she may thereby lose herself in the ideal."

Since Levinson's day, much has happened to broaden and diversify the psychological character of women's points. As Edwin Denby wrote, "In 'Swan Lake' they are part of the cruel remoteness of the beloved; in 'Noces' they hammer out a savage intoxication. Elsewhere, in scenes of intelligent irony, they can look petulant or particular, absurd or fashionable." But nothing has altered the fact that having this technical resource at her command removes the woman to a realm where the man cannot follow.

A ballerina is, in Anastos's definition, "a creature of complete artifice whose nature transcends sexuality" (which is why she may be impersonated by a man). Unlike her male partner, she is both an artist and a work of art, and in her quality of expression she is self-made. Choreography controls only the configuration of a performance. Great choreography, of course, becomes revelation, but even Balanchine said it: "Performance begins, choreographer disappears." What the ballerina *is* she alone creates. A ballerina's job is to constantly refine this creation; choreography she leaves to others.

The Trockadero under Anastos said something truthful about the sexual and moral basis of ballet conventions. It was a violent caricature of the worst that can happen when the impulse to perfection meets its antithesis, and personal vanity, to say nothing of grosser temptations, devours these consummate creatures of artifice. History, repeating itself nightly in our theatres, records the cost when the primacy of the ballerina becomes tyranny: the art suffers. But when that primacy is ignored the art dies. Whether it was because of the new sexual mores or the new popularity of ballet—a popularity largely founded on the appeal of male dancers—the seventies were to an extreme degree colored by the Tiresias factor. Anastos and his crazed cohort impersonated the ballerina as tyrant. Nureyev and his fellow-usurpers risked depriving ballet of its chief vessel of expression and means of symbolization.

Although Anastos is no longer dressing up in tutus and toe shoes, his philosophy hasn't changed. He began as a rebel who endorsed convention, and he continues to work happily within the conventional dimensions of the art. He is pro-ballerina, pro-music, pro-entertainment. Yet the way he entered the profession and came to have a career must be one of the most improbable stories in the annals of dance. Not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long ago, during a slack period when he was on jury duty, he told it to me.

"I WAS born in Schenectady in 1948, but I was brought up in Newtonville, a village just outside Albany. My father was a Greek immigrant, and he raised my brother and me in the Greek Orthodox faith. He spoke with an accent and had a restaurant, not a Greek restaurant—steaks and chops. He was thirty-seven years older than my mother. My mother's father was younger than my father. My father's father probably knew people who lived in the eighteenth century. I find that wonderful. My father died in 1972, leaving a lot of debts. My mother died six years ago. She'd been one of twelve kids brought up in the Depression, with no education to speak of. She wasn't Greek; she was Welsh, a wild red-headed girl, full of fun—the local Lucille Ball. She worked for my father as a cashier, and sometimes, when she got bored, she'd do crazy things, like set fire to paper airplanes and sail them around the restaurant. My brother belonged to my father, and I belonged to my mother. We were completely different sons in other ways, too. I was the class clown. He was a brilliant student with a great academic record and a great future. His whole life was ruined by one thing that happened to him at college: some pranksters put LSD in his food, and it brought out something in his chemical composition and completely changed him. He never recovered, and we never found out who did it. He lives in a halfway house in Troy, under medical supervision. He's a paranoid schizophrenic.

"My parents' lack of education was a source of conflict between them and me. When I decided I wanted to study music, they were appalled. I had to fight tooth and nail to get a piano. I wound up buying a used upright out of my pocket money when I was twelve years old. It cost fifteen dollars. I don't know why I wanted to study music; I just knew I liked it. And it was a good way of revolting against my parents. If my mother had forced me to take piano lessons, I probably would have rejected them. Actually, she never even drove me to my lessons, because by the time I was going regularly she was an alcoholic.

"Apart from the piano, my musical training was completely haphazard. I'd go to the record store and buy records by their covers. That's how I discovered opera. I'd heard opera on the radio, so the form wasn't unknown to me. But in the record store I spotted an album of Joan Sutherland's. There was a beautiful picture of her on the cover—masses of red hair, big jaw, big earrings—and there were also pictures of her in historic bel-canto roles drawn in the style of nineteenth-century lithographs. I was completely fascinated. What the pictures seemed to be telling me was that here was a person who had connected herself somehow to the past, to a period that for her was still alive. That album was 'The Art of the Prima Donna.' It was Sutherland's first big record and the start of my Sutherland fixation. There was another guy in school who liked opera, Jerry McGuire; he and I began going on the bus to New York to see Tebaldi and Milanov and Callas at the Met. I worked at the restaurant to pay for the tickets. When I was sixteen, I saw the two performances that Sutherland and Marilyn Horne gave of 'Semiramide' in Boston. Marilyn Horne, who was six months pregnant, appeared in drag, in a curly Assyrian beard and mustache, and the audience accepted it and loved her without reservation. That left an indelible impression. I think some part of the Trocks was born right there.

"I believe that if you're really curious about something you can invent it for yourself without ever seeing it. And much of your invention will turn out to be true. I invented an awful lot of what I thought opera was, and when I finally saw it my ideas were confirmed. In opera, the music is *it*. You hear it, and then when you see it live on the stage you're completely ready for it. I remember when 'The Art of the Prima Ballerina' came out—the companion album that Richard Bonynge did with Markova a few years after 'The Art of the Prima Donna.' I've since used a lot of that ballet music for nefarious purposes, but the record didn't make nearly so great an impression on me at the time as 'The Art of the Prima Donna.' It couldn't present Markova's performances—only her music and her pictures.

Not long after my trip to Boston, my high-school drama club took a field trip to New York to see 'Oliver!' When we got there, we were dismissed for lunch and told to reassemble at the theatre where 'Oliver!' was playing. I can't imagine a teacher doing anything like that today. Anyway, I wandered off on my own and wound up a few blocks away, at the Met. This was the old Met, in the theatre district. A line was forming for the matinée. I looked at the posters; it was the Royal Ballet in 'Swan Lake.' Well, I'd never heard of the Royal Ballet, but right then I knew I was going to have to see this. All thoughts of 'Oliver!' and my teachers and my classmates went straight out of my head. I bought a ticket and went in. It was the greatest thing I'd ever seen. It was not like opera. There was continuous action all over the stage, and it all fit the music, but none of it could have been predicted *from* the music. Compared to opera, ballet is a great mysterious rite—you can't guess what it is until you see it, and even then it doesn't sink in until you see it again. Actually, the first ballet I ever saw was 'Billy the Kid,' when the Royal Winnipeg company came through Albany on tour. I was struck by the *idea* of ballet, but that was all. Anyway, there I was at 'Swan Lake,' and 'Swan Lake' lasts a lot longer than 'Oliver!' When it was over, I ran as fast as I could up to the 'Oliver!' theatre. The bus was out in front, all the kids were in it, and the teachers were apoplectic. They had already called the police. Well, darling, they just killed me. They took away my Royal Ballet souvenir program. I'm sure I ruined 'Oliver!' for them.

"The upshot of it all was that I became a ballet fan and a line person. A line person stood in line for hours at the Met and got standing room and saw all the performances. The stars of that first 'Swan Lake' had been Svetlana Beriosova and Desmond Doyle. I still adored Beriosova, but I fell in love with Fonteyn. I loved everything she and Nureyev did. I was also crazy about the Bolshoi. They were a great company then, not arrogant and punky, like now. I went to New York City Ballet, too, but I was too young to know what I was seeing. And there was no line at City Ballet. My education in dance really happened in line. I learned more from those fans than I'd ever learned in school or from formal lessons. I really believe that the most valuable kind of education is informal. By this time, I was taking ballet lessons in Schenectady from a woman named Marilyn Ramsey. But

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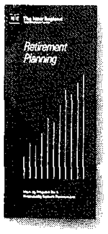

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there was no school for learning how to be a director or how to be a choreographer, and I don't think there ever will be. You have to train yourself. You have to be a fan. You have to be obsessed, and to want to be in the theatre every night. I got to the point where seeing performances just wasn't enough, so I got a job backstage as a dresser for New York City Ballet in Saratoga. That was the summer of 1970. 'Goldberg Variations' had its première that season; it was a very big event. I have Peter Martins' shoes from that performance, signed by him. I worked for Ducky Copeland, the head of male wardrobe, and I used to iron Mr. B.'s shirts. Let me tell you, the snap buttons on those Western shirts are hell to iron around.

"I saw the performance every night. I began to understand that ballet was more than performers. I began to seek out choreographers rather than stars. I also began to think about moving permanently to New York—I'd been there off and on since 1966—and after my father died I moved in with my friend Louise Goldstein, who lived on Christopher Street. I started taking ballet at Wilson Morelli's studio, on Fourteenth Street. Morelli had been one of Toumanova's later partners. He was a very flamboyant, theatrical person. Later, when I did 'Don Quixote' for the Trockadero, I had an image in my mind of those two dancing together. New York was so different in the seventies. There were dance studios every ten feet. Now there are only two or three places where you can go to take class. I studied with Elizabeth Anderson-Ivantzova, who was on Fifty-sixth Street, right behind Carnegie Hall. I had a day job at *The New York Review of Books*, and I'd take her class in the middle of the afternoon, then go back to my job. She was a pre-Revolutionary Bolshoi ballerina, Moscow-trained. She was old, and she wanted to die. Once, she put my hands on her throat and asked me to kill her. She'd broken her hip, and, you know, when you're in your eighties and break your hip it's no joke. She was always very gloomy, but she taught very interesting, arcane classes—steps that nobody did anymore. From her I learned this elegant, antique Moscow style. It was useless to me as a dancer but not as a choreographer. I used that style a lot with the Trocks. But that was later. At the time that I was studying with Mme. Anderson, I had no creative focus. I never really intended to be a professional dancer—I hadn't had enough training. I sort of wanted to write about dance. But for the moment it was enough for me to be part of the New York scene.

"New York in the sixties and early seventies had a lot of wild, avant-garde people performing all over the place. There were hundreds of little shows and a lot of drag acts, like Charles Ludlam's Ridiculous Theatrical Company. But I didn't see Ludlam until the late seventies. The show I remember best was the Palm Casino Revue. It played at the Bouwerie Lane Theatre and other seedy venues. It was a variety show devoted to camp, and it had drag queens with names like Mario Montez and Alexis del Lago. It also had women in drag. These shows were written and performed by amateurs, and they were often very talented satirists. One night, my friend Larry Kaplan, who is now a movie publicist, took me to the latest East Village experience—a travesty ballet company called Trockadero Gloxinia. Part of the experience was going backstage after the show to meet the star 'ballerina' and pay compliments to 'Madame,' who stayed in character. I was young, and the whole thing got to me. This was New York—it was crazy, it was bad, and it was so much fun. Somehow, I got invited to join the company. I didn't last long. The star, Larry Rea, was an absolute dictator. And there wasn't much dance content in it. Outside of guys' getting up on point, it hadn't a lot to do with ballet. After Larry Rea fired a bunch of us for trying to cook up our own routines, it seemed logical that we—Natch Taylor, Antony Bassae, and I—should form our own company. We named ourselves Trockadero de Monte Carlo after the Ballets Russes schisms of the thirties. No drag queens were hired. We were serious about ballet, and I think we were funny about it.

"But, oh, it was hard to dance on point. It really hurts to do that. When I did 'Cinderella' with Misha, he tried very hard to do it, and he actually did do it very well in rehearsals. But he was afraid his ankle would give out. He was just too big a star and too valuable to the company to take such a risk. It took

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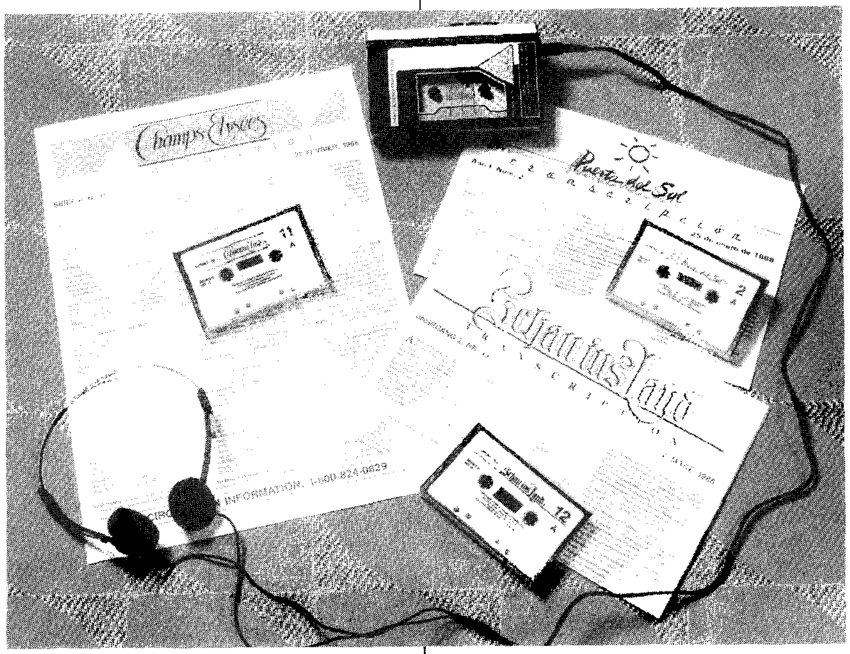

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quite a while for the Trocks to be able to get through a whole performance on their toes. A year or so after the company came into being, we hired a teacher to train us in pointwork. You'd get on point and stay up as long as you could; then, when you couldn't stand it any longer, you'd come down to demi-point. The person who stayed up longest became the ballerina of whatever it was we were rehearsing. It was very Darwinian. I took the training very seriously—I *evolved*. I thought that if I worked hard and got to be good it wouldn't hurt so much. That turned out not to be true; it never wasn't painful. It's not just that your weight is on your toes; it's the fact that the shoe encases it all and is rubbing against the foot and creating blisters. Maybe if we could have performed all year long it might not have been so bad, but we had long layoffs and never got up to speed. After I left, the company got dancers who could really do drag on point. But who cared? There was no parody in it anymore. All you had was a bunch of guys dressed up like ugly girls.

"Nothing else about the dancing was hard to do. The adagio in 'Swan Lake' really is easy. All you need is a good partner and to be able to stand a long time on one foot. We would finesse the lifts. We did a lot of shoulder sits, because they're easy and they look good. Fish dives are not hard because the weight is all centrally distributed. The company came pretty much into its own in '75. By the end of that year, we had an agent, Sheldon Soffer, and he made us into a business. Tony Bassae left at that point—he had an aversion to success. A lot of downtown people did at that time. He had been the artistic director, so Natch and I took the company over. We started touring and paying salaries, and got busier and busier. We were treated beautifully everywhere we went—all over the United States and Canada and Latin America. Eventually, I got tired of touring—living out of a suitcase, all that. But I really quit because I didn't know what else to do with the Trockadero. The list of classics is very short, and I had run out of famous choreographers to parody. And you can only parody the good ones. The others are a parody already. By the middle of '78, I was gone. I'd become unhappy there. I didn't want to spend my life in a wig and a tutu.

"My last performance with the Trocks was in Albany, my home town. By a weird coincidence, it was at the Palace Theatre, where I'd seen 'Billy the Kid' years before. My mother saw me dance for the first time, and she thought it was a real hoot. When she came backstage, she was laughing and crying. A lot of my friends turned out. I think they were puzzled by the show—I mean, they laughed, and all that, but they didn't exactly equate it with success. It was 'So what are you going to do with yourself?' And my mother—what was she supposed to say? 'My son the ballerina'?

"I had no plan, nothing in mind. I was an arranger of steps. I couldn't pretend to call myself a choreographer. But I had to turn my career around somehow, so I sat down and wrote letters to the heads of all the ballet companies in the country. Nothing happened, not even a nibble. I'm sure some people were amused by my letter, and some must have been disgusted—how dare I? Nobody would have me. About a year later, I had a letter from Georges Skibine saying that he had seen the Trockadero and enjoyed it and would I be interested in doing 'something humoristic' for the Dallas Ballet? I did 'Forgotten Memories,' a screwy piece, very Trockadero in style. It owed a lot to Tudor's 'Lilac Garden'; the characters had names like The Shadow of Her Doubt. One of my first non-Trockadero-style pieces was done for Garden State Ballet. I was asked to set a new piece of choreography—something funny, of course. I didn't want to do another funny piece, so I suggested a two-ballet deal: I'd do a funny piece if I could come back and do an unfunny piece. This is the pattern my career has taken since then. I've signed a lot of two-ballet contracts over the years, and I've managed to do a lot of ballets that aren't comedies."

LAST year, Anastos choreographed five ballets, a record number for him. Only one was a comedy, but it has turned out to be Anastos's greatest hit since "Yes, Virginia, Another Piano Ballet." This was "The Gilded Bat," based on Edward Gorey's book of that name and produced by Ballet West, in Salt Lake City. Peter Anastos and I have three things in common: "Billy the Kid" was the first ballet we both ever saw; we both, unknown to each other, worked in Saratoga during the summer dance season of 1970, I as a reviewer for the Albany *Times-Union;* we have both been involved with "The Gilded Bat." Gorey's book first appeared serially, in 1966, in a magazine I edited, *Ballet Review*. (I had asked Gorey, a balletomane, for something on the subject of balletomania; he answered with "The Gilded Bat." The book I was expecting, "The Lavender Leotard," did not surface until several years later.) "The Gilded Bat" is the saga of Maud Splaytoes, ballet prodigy. After toiling in a provincial troupe, she shoots to fame as Mirella Splatova, the discovery of Baron de Zabrus, renowned impresario. Splatova dances an extensive repertory, all of which is inspired by birds or other winged creatures. She dies at the height of her career, in a plane crash mysteriously precipitated by what looks like a giant condor. That night, the music for her signature piece, "The Gilded Bat," is played as a memorial while her bat costume hangs above the stage.

Maud's story is told in thirty black-and-white panels with single-sentence captions. Gorey's pen describes a cryptic Edwardian universe filled with antsy wallpaper, ball fringes, potted palms, peacock feathers. Everything is pattern: the limbs of the ballet dancers, dolefully extended, reflected in mirrors; the bare, scrobiculate floors on which they dance, endlessly echoed in those same mirrors. Sandwiched between theatrical triumphs—Splatova as the Papillon Enragé, Splatova in " 'Le Corbeau' (d'après E. A. Poe)"—are scenes of Maud darning her toe shoes, Maud doing her laundry, Maud at the barre, accompanied by the refrain that is the book's great *cri:* "Her life was rather monotonous. . . . Her life went on being fairly tedious. . . . Her life did not cease to be somewhat dreary. . . . Her life was really no different from what it had ever been." Stylization does not preclude realism. (Even the Splaytoeses' house, in a brick-faced London suburb, received real-life corroboration from the depiction of the Fonteyn family home in the television biography of the ballerina that was shown recently on PBS.) The ending conflates two actual events—Pavlova's memorial concert and the death of Isadora Duncan, strangled by one of her flowing scarves. (It was caught in the wheel of her car. Isadora's last words, on getting in beside the handsome young driver, were "*Adieu, mes amis. Je vais à la gloire.*")

Mirella Splatova is not just another great ballerina; she is "the reigning ballerina of the age, and one of its symbols"—the stuff that Trockadero dreams are made on. In the spring of 1989, when Anastos told me he had begun work on "The Gilded Bat," I asked him if he hadn't thought of it long before, as a vehicle for Tchikaboumskaya. Of course he had. "But the story wouldn't have worked in travesty," he said. "It would have been something different. And the Trocks shied away from anything that was too interesting in its own right. They just wanted to get out there and do a routine." He shelved the idea, but other projects having to do with Gorey and Gorey material kept cropping up. Gorey designed the Trockadero "Giselle." Anastos choreographed a piece for the Eglevsky Ballet that had an original scenario, plus scenery and costumes, by Gorey. Anastos remembers the ballet, "Fête Diverse, ou le Bal de Mme. H——," as "colorful and silly, but really not much more than that. I was young and dumb enough to think that I could realize all the possibilities that were hinted at in the libretto. It's hard to build dramatic structure into Ted's work—it's all so atmospheric. Charles Addams's characters can have real lives, but Gorey's don't exist outside their condition. The ballet was about guests at a party suffering from some type of degenerative disease. I remember that the dress Ted designed for Allegra Kent was all pavéed in safety pins, and I had to completely reconstruct the partnering in the pas de deux because the pins kept popping open." Then came a children's-TV special, also with Allegra Kent, called "A Gorey Halloween"; it had a two-minute segment billed as "The Gilded Bat," but this had no connection to the book. Nor did Anastos intend a connection. "Two minutes was all I had," he told me. "That was just time enough to show Allegra flapping around in a bat costume. I do think 'The Gilded Bat' is one of the few Gorey books that can be staged in their own terms. It is a ballet story with ballets in it. It stops and sits still in a theatrical situation and allows you to extrapolate ideas for dancing."

"The Gilded Bat" is forty minutes long. And the author of the show is not Edward Gorey but Peter Anastos. Originally, the two planned to collaborate, but, in the end, "extrapolate" came to be the operative word for everything about the production except the scenery, which was designed by Gorey himself. The costumes were made up from ideas suggested by the printed drawings. But Gorey's text and its relation to the drawings presented a real challenge. Whimsical and enigmatic, "The Gilded Bat" is a Gorey fantasy as well as a ballet story. How much did it really have to do with the art and its lore? The reputation as a dance historian which Anastos had enjoyed since Trockadero days was being put to a test. How would he interpret the five ballets that Maud-Mirella dances, especially the title number, to which the only clue in the book is the costume? When I talked to Anastos that spring, he hadn't yet formed a clear idea of how to stage the number; he said that he was hoping for some hints from Gorey, who was on Cape Cod writing the scenario, and that meanwhile he'd gone ahead with the

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composer, Peter Golub, and tackled the four other ballets. If I wanted to see them, I could go to Aspen, where a more or less complete version of the ballet would be mounted that summer in a workshop production.

In June, I went to Boston to see Mark Morris's "Dido and Aeneas" (a Tiresian production in which Morris danced the role of Dido), and found Gorey in the audience. What about "The Gilded Bat"? Would I see him the following month in Aspen? Gorey was elegantly elusive, but then he always is when it comes to discussing his work. This time, though, there was a bit of a problem. When I arrived in Aspen, Anastos was in the middle of a technical rehearsal, trying to get the sound of the airplane crash, which is heard offstage, to coincide with a lighting effect. He called a break, and we went outside and sat on the grass. The grounds of the high school where the performances were being held are covered with aspens, and from the aspens dangled dozens of pairs of black tights, the overflow of the ballet company in residence. From time to time, dancers with white faces and blackened eyepits walked over to have Anastos check their makeup. It was a Gorey-esque landscape. Gorey himself was nowhere to be seen. Anastos told me he'd written the script himself. "Ted tried to help," he said, "but somehow he just couldn't conceive 'The Gilded Bat' as anything other than the book he'd produced—which was only natural." Just before the première, in Salt Lake City, Gorey gave a telephone interview to a local reporter and said he wished he could have contributed more to the ballet. But in Aspen Anastos seemed not at all bothered at having to go ahead without him. "I like to think that what I've done is really Ted's script," he said. "He just never bothered to write it himself."

Though the stage version of "The Gilded Bat" resembles the world of Gorey's imagination, it is different in tone and texture. One of the least ineffable of Gorey's tales still loses its voice in theatrical translation and becomes straightforward madness, much as "Alice" does whenever it is dramatized. Anastos's scenario fills out implications, invents transitions, even adds a character or two. Gorey's captions are the nucleus of a monologue delivered by a narrator whose suave manner and appearance—smoking jacket, armchair, brandy snifter—spoof the hosts of "Masterpiece Theatre" and "Mystery!" (the latter of which is prefaced by a Gorey cartoon). Some of Anastos's literary contributions could pass for Gorey's; for example, the catalogue of the "ungrateful" roles Maud dances while in the corps de ballet—"a lady in waiting to the Princess Snegorouchka, a highland dancer in 'The Firth of Forth,' a vestal virgin in 'Lalla Rookh, or The Rose of Tandoori,' one of the Juggler's Assistants in 'The Wooden Leg.' " Other additions to the text are managed by transplanting details from several Gorey works, notably "The Blue Aspic," a satire on opera and a companion volume to "The Gilded Bat." This is the classic method of adaptation, pursued to the classic end of telling a story in theatrical terms. On the page, all of Gorey's thirty scenes have equal weight. Anastos reduces some, expands others; the cultivated Gorey monotone gives way to tension and climax. Mirella's celebrity in Gorey's rendering is inscrutable: "Mirella all at once became chic and mysterious. She was seen everywhere with the Baron." Anastos appends to these two sentences a cascade of vulgarly specific information:

> To honor her dancing a party was given
> By the old Maharajah of Eschnipadurhi,
> And all of the guests' attention was driven
> To see how she dipped her hors d'oeuvres in the curry.
> She was showered with prizes, awards, and degrees
> In such a profusion she scarcely could hope
> For time to be photographed, relaxed and at ease,
> In chic advertisements for cucumber soap.

The text is spoken with unctuous precision by John Hart, C.B.E., since 1985 the artistic director of Ballet West. The role, a climax of sorts to a fifty-two-year career begun partnering Fonteyn and other Vic-Wells ballerinas, is a caricature to which Hart's air of affable fatuity is perfectly suited. (At every appearance, his brandy snifter gets bigger, until, at the end, it's the size of a basketball.)

The Splaytoeses—Mother, Dad, Maudie—are introduced standing behind their garden gate; it opens, and the child is seen, her feet perfectly placed in fifth position. When Maudie meets her first teacher, Mme. Trepidovska, they touch fingers like Michelangelo's God and Adam or Balanchine's Apollo and Terpsichore. The farewell performance of the great Solepsiskaya is not danced but witnessed by the dance students from a box—a scene Anastos concocted from photographs of a Balanchine number in the "Cochran Revue" of 1930. Anastos isn't interested in having the audience grasp his allusions; as long as his meaning is understood, he's satisfied. Having once been part of the unsophisticated public, he believes in simple communication, in keeping everything clear and penetrable to audiences outside the big cities who will be seeing his ballets on tour. The touched fingers are a clue to the difference between the book of "The Gilded Bat" and the ballet: Gorey wouldn't dream of using anything so obvious. "I took a long time trying to decide whether to do that or not," Anastos confessed. "But then that *is* the image, isn't it? Isn't that the relationship that even bad teachers want to have with their students?" As for the big-city sophisticates, by now well versed in Balanchine, Anastos says that they'll get the reference to "Apollo" but not to Michelangelo.

Anastos approached the five ballet set pieces in the same audience-friendly spirit. He subscribes to the eccentricities of Gorey's vision, but he lets people have their fun. And when Gorey loosens up a little, Anastos really goes to town. The caption for one of the ballets reads "After Federojenska did a grand jeté into the wings one matinée and was never seen again, Maud took over 'Oiseau de Glace' to great acclaim." "Oiseau" would appear to be a Frozen North version of "Swan Lake." Anastos stages it with Eskimo hunters in parkas and snowshoes, armed with harpoons. When the Icebird disappears in her grand jeté, the hunters fling their harpoons after her. "It's the Hunters' Revenge," Anastos says. "The idea came to me during the rehearsal. Didn't you ever wonder what goes through the minds of the hunters in 'Swan Lake' when the Prince tells them *not* to shoot? It just seemed right that the Eskimos should do what they're supposed to do, and kill their dinner. Who cares that their leader has fallen in love with her?" (This seemingly innocent logic is typical of Anastos's way with the classics. It may also explain why Federojenska was never seen again.) The Enraged Butterfly who chases the lovers out of the Jardin de Regrets "hovers and swats with abandon," according to Anastos's instructions to Ballet West's Erin Leedom. At the end, she folds herself into a quivering huddle on the floor. "I wanted this to be a kind of 'Dying Swan' perpetuum mobile," Anastos explained. "This one doesn't die—she just stays mad, forever *enragé*, even after she's chased the intruders away."

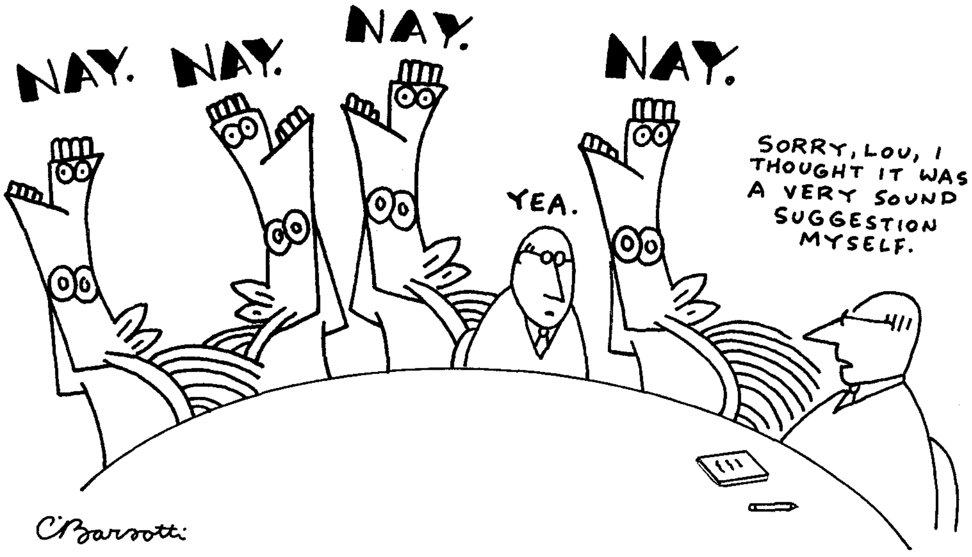
Peter Golub is a young New York composer who has worked with Anastos twice before, both times as an arranger. He provided a Jerome Kern score for "Straight from the Heart" (Milwaukee Ballet, 1987) and a Rameau score for "Trianon" (Atlanta Ballet, 1987). With Golub, a musical prankster and pasticheur with a keen sense of theatre, Anastos was able to indulge his passion for periods and genres in "The Gilded Bat." For "Bain d'Oiseaux," the Trepidovska school's recital, Golub paraphrased the ballet music in "Rigoletto," which already sounds like a paraphrase. "The fact that it's shockingly banal music may have been Verdi's point," Anastos reflected. "But it was exactly the kind of tacky but elevated music we needed. That was an easy one. For the other ballets we had only Gorey's titles and drawings to go on. He never spelled anything out. In 'Jardin de Regrets' he showed a Poet and his Beloved, with her all vaporish leaning against him, and both of them being attacked by the Enraged Butterfly. It all seemed to cry out for bad School of Wagner French music—that kind of inexplicably hysterical, thick French music. It's a period that I think Ted Gorey was very influenced by. In 'Le Bal de Mme. H——' we used Saint-Saëns. Here I wanted something more like Chabrier. Peter let me dictate to him an awful lot. I would play out whatever I wanted on the piano—crudely, because I'm not a composer—and he would make sense of it. Or I would ask him for four more bars here, maybe a repeat, then eight bars there and a six-count transition, change the A-flat to C minor, and he would be wonderfully accommodating. Both Peter and I love using the past—we revel in it. We wanted to make some progress historically from the dumb-dumb things Maud does at first to the more sophisticated ballets she dances when she's a star. For 'Oiseau de Glace' we thought of Glazunov and that whole turn-of-the-century Russian school of ballet music: Tcherepnin, Lyadov. Funny waltzes, big drama. There's an *orage* sequence: grumbling, growling music in the tradition of the eighteenth-century French opera-ballet. And there's a generous dollop of Rimsky. The setting is important here: the whole ballet takes place on an iceberg. Petipa loved exotic locales, and you can't get much more exotic than that. 'Le Corbeau' is very self-conscious mod-ren music of the nineteen-twenties and thirties. I didn't really want to do Poe's 'Raven'—that sounds to me more like a Nureyev project. I wanted to make a romantic-modern ballet of the Massine school: the tortured poet, the soul possessed. Not really do it full out—just suggest it, because none of these things are supposed to be more than four- or five-minute excerpts."

Maud's progress as a dancer is also seen in condensation, along with something more: the unsparing monotony of her days. Her daily regimen at the Trepidovska school ("located above a row of shops") is a mindless tinkle, composed by Anastos:

> She learned the plié,
> the tendu,
> the flic-flac
> and fondu . . .
> the en dedans,
> the en dehors
> (the piqué turns
> done out-of-doors).

The drudgery of the artist's life seldom makes its way into theatrical memoirs; in stories about dancers, it is usually transmuted into suffering and sacrifice, a far, far nobler thing. The technical and perhaps the emotional high point of the entire production may well be the Ballet Hochepot montage, telling us just what life in a touring company can come down to: a marathon of "Les Sylphides" weaving itself unendingly onward, and blending into an infinity of railway depots. And after Maud becomes a ballerina her life is not only tedious but solitary. Against this bleak background, the hubris of the artist soars to its brief height and then—destruction. When Anastos first went out to Salt Lake City to work with the Ballet West dancers, he took with him collections of Gorey's work for them to look at, so that they could have a sense, as he put it, "of the darkness of even the most simple things." He spoke to the press department there in happy anticipation of a collaboration. "Edward and I work as a dream team. We both have a very dark sense of humor."

And yet temperamentally they are quite different. You feel that when Gorey goes to bed at night he pulls the covers over his head. Anastos's outlook on life is more jauntily sardonic. In the midst of the eternal ennui of the touring-company sequence he plants a struggling danseur, blind under his load of ballerina, unable to find his way offstage. Gorey's glee over Splatova's end—the puny bat costume hanging in the darkness, in limp commemoration of her life—somehow includes a ritualistic shudder. Anastos's commemoration scene is as barmy, but it's not at all the Elegy for a Dead Bat that Gorey imagines. Gorey may well have been thinking of Emma Livry, who died of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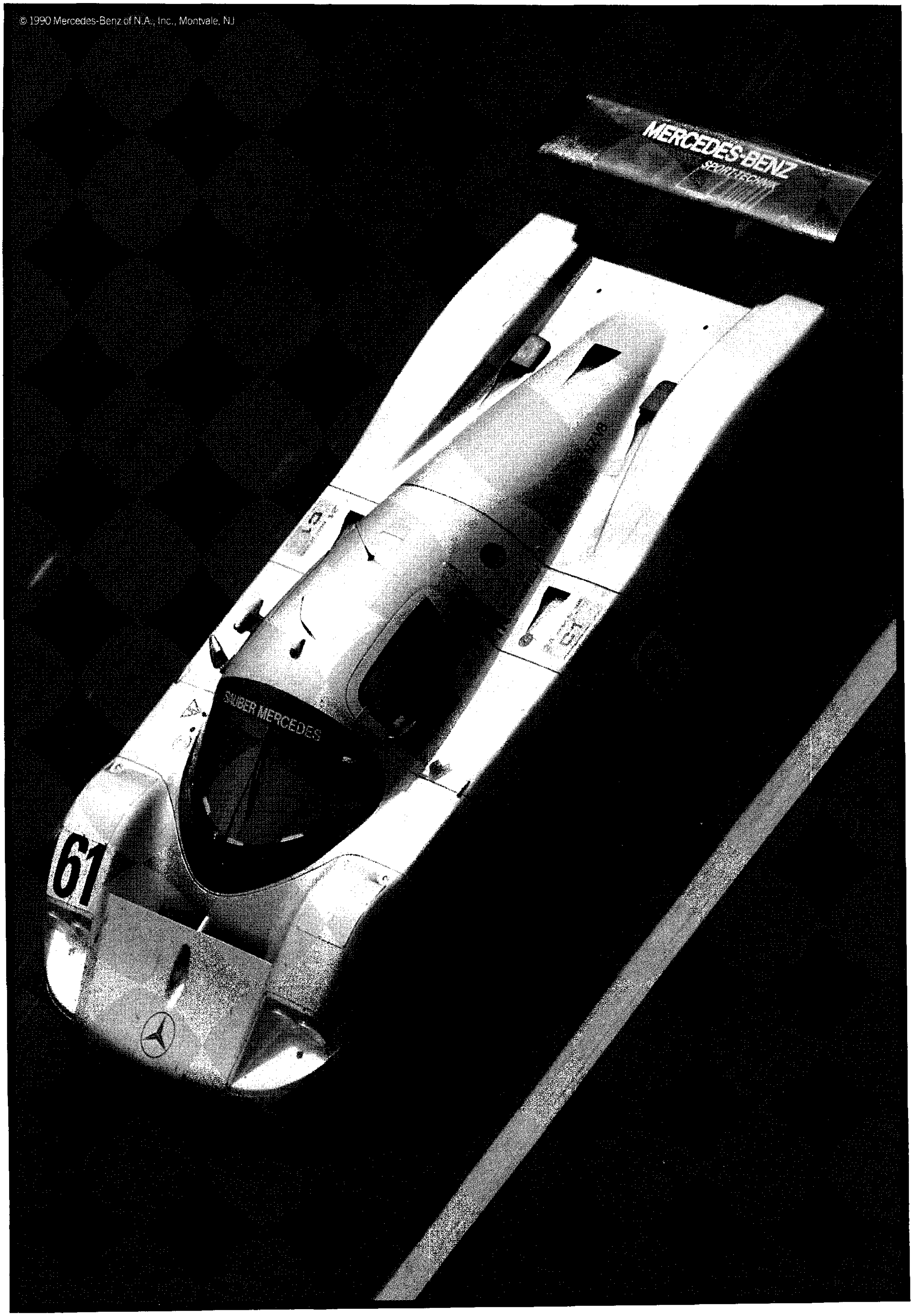
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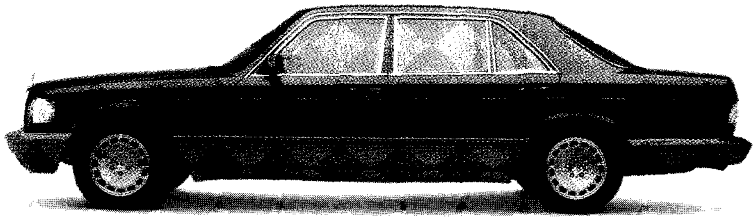
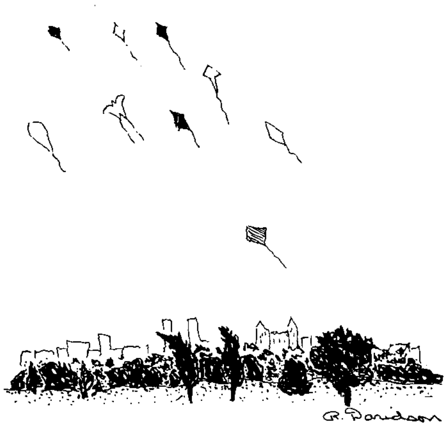


burns when her costume caught fire during a rehearsal of "La Muette de Portici" in 1862. The most brilliant French dancer of her epoch, Livry secured her greatest success in "Le Papillon," at the climax of which she was lured by flames to her death. At her funeral, Gautier tells us, two white butterflies hovered over the coffin. There's more. Six months before the accident, it is said, Livry reflected on death by fire, which was a constant hazard in gaslit theatres: "That must be very painful. All the same, it is a fine death for a dancer." Bats are not butterflies; how bats fit into ballet legend was a problem that Anastos didn't solve until nine months after he started thinking about it.

"Initially, I thought of doing something expressionistic, like Doris Humphrey's 'The Life of the Bee,' only with all these bats," he told me. "But Ted Gorey never said what he thought of that idea, so I decided it wasn't very good. Now, I always follow the brightest light in front of me, and usually it's the music; whatever it says is what I follow. But in this case the bright light turned out to be the cover of the book. From that I got the idea that the ballet was some type of music-hall entertainment having to do with a masked ball. She's not really a bat, she's just dressed up as a bat. Gorey drew her suspended over a group of men in tuxedos who are waving champagne glasses and falling down. It's obviously some scene of revelry, and it's meant to be very happy and silly. And on the cover he lettered the title in French: 'La Chauve-Souris Dorée.' Now, this was totally subliminal, and I didn't even remember it at the time, but Mme. Anderson, my teacher, was in the Chauve-Souris—the show named after the Bat Theatre in Moscow. The impresario, Nikita Baliev, left Russia after the Revolution and produced this Russian revue in Paris. It ran all during the twenties and thirties, and it consisted of dancers, singers, jugglers, magicians—a real variety show, but with class. After the dogs jumped through the fire hoops, somebody came out and danced an excerpt from 'Swan Lake.' Anyway, that's my impression. In all the pictures I ever saw of Baliev, he was always very formally dressed, in white tie with a boutonnière. Somehow, it made perfect sense to me that this ballet 'The Gilded Bat' was that whole scene. It was that scene jumbled together with Diaghilev. It had nothing to do with anything—either Diaghilev or the actual Chauve-Souris—but it had something to do with everything. It was cabaret, it was gypsy music, it was nutty, it was fast. And it made just enough sense as an image to be a fitting conclusion."

To a rambunctious "Hungarian" score by Golub, Anastos staged a three-minute ballet for a female ensemble dressed in gold batwings and helmets, who are part of the time suspended in upside-down lifts by men in black tails. It's an ensemble ballet, as the ballerina is dead. Her place is taken by a spotlight, which flashes around the stage being "partnered" with increasingly frantic ingenuity by the men. At the ballet's première, some big-city sophisticates remarked that this comic effect was too subtle. How many in the audience would remember that legendary charity performance in Brussels when, to quote Keith Money's biography of Pavlova, "the spotlight drifted about the empty stage as a visual accompaniment to the lachrymose melody of 'The Swan,' and the Queen of the Belgians and the rest of the audience stood, blinking through tears"? Anastos's conception was not designed to impress the Queen of the Belgians. As he says, the ballet of "The Gilded Bat" has something to do with everything; even "Batman," the movie hit of 1989, resonates through its idiotic consciousness. I hadn't realized that the spotlight is not even in Gorey's book. Like the finger-touching, it's a quote of a quote and at the same time—forget the Sistine ceiling, hang Pavlova, damn "The Red Shoes"—a trope that any child can understand.

AFTER thirty-five years of watching professional dance on the stage and in the studio, I still don't know what choreographers do or how they do it. In some unfathomable way, they create movement for dancers from rhythms they hear in their heads, but even when they derive the rhythms from music the movement they come up with is always surprising—always not what the rhythms in *my* head tell *me* it ought to be. It's easy to make ballets in one's head. Looking at houses and trees and fields as they sweep past a train window, you sense a dynamic in the changing proportions of the landscape that is like the undercurrent of a dance. Or a nice piece of Baroque music comes over the car radio, and you think, Balanchine. Here's the ballerina's entrance, here's where the corps comes in, here's the cadenza where she does her big solo. You may even once in a while visualize actual steps. (They're usually from a ballet that you've seen.) But it's hard to keep dreaming as long as the music lasts. Finally, all you have is the thought: Why isn't there a ballet to this piece of music?



The truth about choreography is that it is not simply invention. Creating a dance has more to do with uncovering relationships among variables—with sensing the immanent living logic in the materials at hand. In the unfolding of a good piece of choreography, some hidden correspondence is revealed—of the step to the beat, this step to that one, this dancer's quality of articulation to her partner's or to the group's. As one watches, the relation of step to sound and, more mysteriously, of *shape* to sound begins to seem charged with suspense, and in the growing confluence of all these things one starts to see and hear a pattern. What began as an exercise ends as a theatrical event.

No matter how much mental preparation a choreographer makes, the real work is done in the studio, where real bodies are in play. It is a slow and exacting process, infinitely boring to watch. A speedy worker like Anastos gets maybe two minutes of choreography done in two hours, and if it seems wrong the next day he doesn't hesitate to throw it out. He says it took him ten years to develop enough self-confidence to do that. He's certainly much more sure of himself than he was when he began free-lancing. In those days, he was looking longingly at the dancers in the best companies and thinking what it would be like to work with them. The idea of choreographing at New York City Ballet seemed to bring timorous Olga to the surface.

"I hear they're tough," he'd say. "I hear they make withering comments."

"They do," someone would immediately respond. "They say, 'What, more pirouettes?' They say, 'Very Jerry.' "

"Very what?"

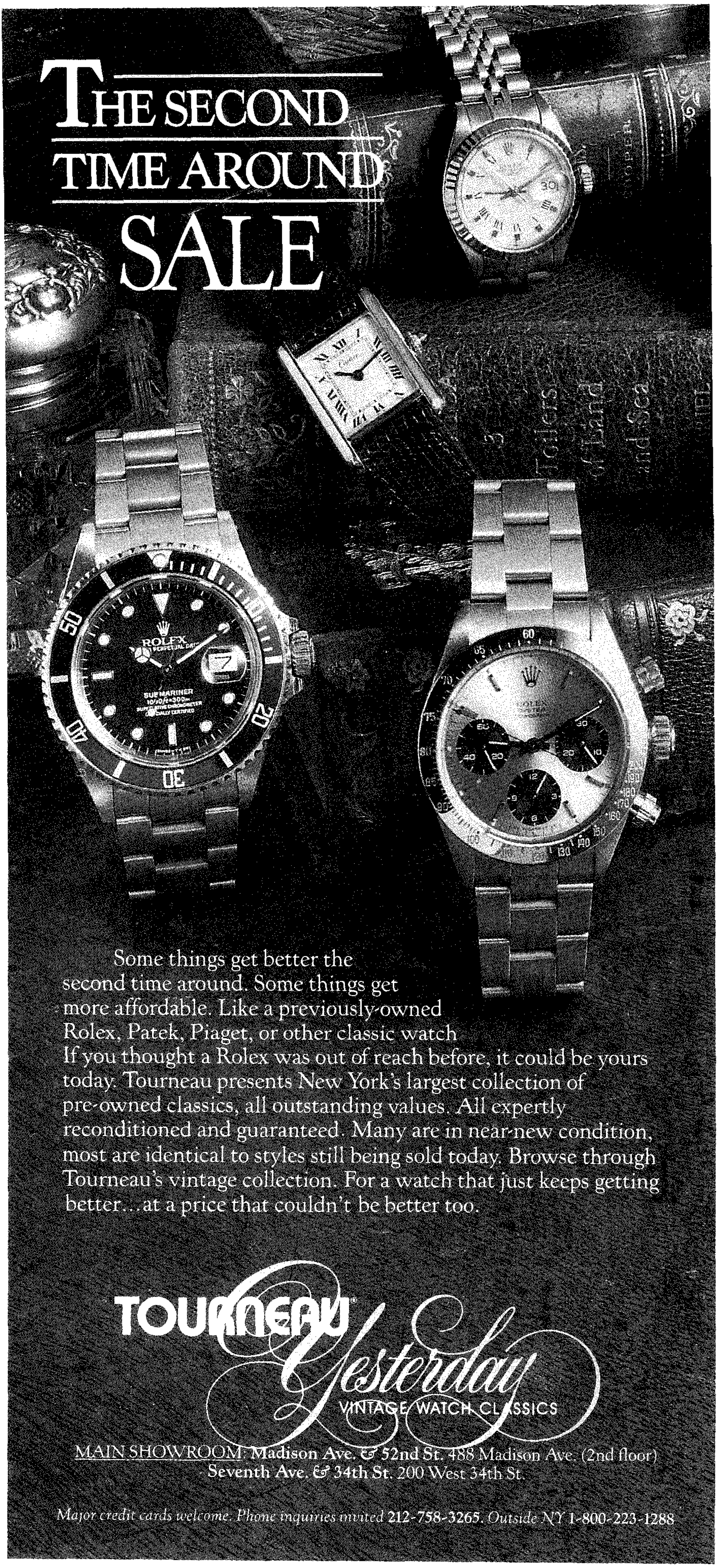
"Jerry. Too much like Robbins."

"Oh," Anastos would say, looking a little ill.

That was then. Today, he can be pretty tough himself. "A good dancer is supposed to be able to solve problems," he told me recently. "It's my job to have the idea, it's theirs to make it work. If it's not going to work, we all know it. Good dancers don't have to be spoon-fed. They help you see what the possibilities are."

Anastos's greatest desire is still to work with first-rate dancers on a steady basis. The ballerina of Garden State Ballet is Victoria Hall, a former New York City Ballet soloist. According to Anastos, Hall is a dancer who can "do things." This spring, he completely redid "Gloria," a ballet set to a Vivaldi Mass, to accommodate her technique. "Gloria" is a classical work, in an artless "Greek" style, with flowing lines that evoke Matisse drawings. Hall dances two pas de deux with her partner, Oswaldo Muniz, as the other dancers wind across the stage in chain steps, in walks, in runs. The impression the ballet leaves is one of simple elegance.

"I subscribe to the rules," Anastos said when I asked him what "classical" meant to him. "I like to see the lady dancer down front or up at the top of the pyramid, not dragged across the floor. The image, the function, of the ballerina is so important. It can be creatively distorted, but never to the extent that it isn't ballet. In ballet, you have to know the rules before you can break them. The rules are there for a reason. Ballet can be about a lot of things, but it's not about equal rights. It's not a democracy. In 'Yes, Virginia,' I ridiculed Robbins for trying to make ballet into a brotherhood and sisterhood of equals. Now, you know that when Suzanne Farrell comes on it's just not the same as seeing some other dancer. And it's not a unisex world. I'm sorry, darling, it's just not. Men go up in the air, they jump real high, but they have to come down. Whereas women have this phenomenal ability to look pulled up out of the floor. Yesterday, Vicky sous-sous'd up on



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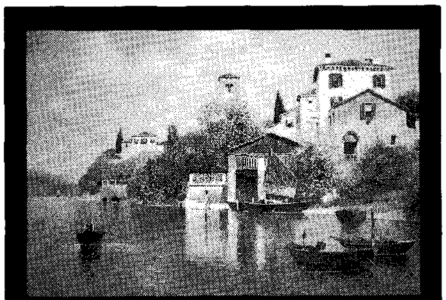

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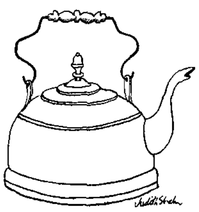
point and did développé à la seconde and held it for eight counts. That's the sort of thing that makes a choreographer's life interesting. Women literally elevate dance from its athletic base. A man can do a thousand pirouettes, and it's wonderful, but it's something you might see in the Olympics. Vicky, now. Here's this big girl who can do most anything a man can do—double tours, tours in second—but all that's not half as fascinating as just being able to rise on toe and bourrée across the floor."

Not that Anastos neglects male dancers. In "Tom Sawyer," an enduring favorite of the city's schoolchildren, he used a cast of men. One of my own favorite Anastos creations is the role danced by Dieter Riesle in the ballroom ballet "Footage"—as a character, half lounge lizard, half male wallflower; as a dancer, half danseur noble, half Fred Astaire. The wonderful number that Riesle performs with his four buddies is as good as classical choreography for men gets. Over the years, Anastos must have turned out a couple of dozen dances for men fully as effective as those he has made for women. As an artist and a classicist, Anastos has had two masters. His sensibility suggests an affinity with Ashton; his style shows the influence of Balanchine. Though he prides himself on being able to turn his hand to any type of work, he is dedicated in principle to the type of ballet, founded in music and committed to pure dancing, which today is primarily associated with Balanchine. For several decades, "the Balanchine ballet" has been the standard of expression for classical choreographers. But in spite of—or, more likely, because of—Balanchine's own tremendous example, the purest practitioners of the form have emerged from modern dance rather than from ballet: Paul Taylor, Twyla Tharp, Mark Morris. And while we are waiting for the academy to yield a new talent of that calibre Anastos comes out of nowhere and starts turning out real ballets—traditional, classical, and danceable.



What this suggests is that to succeed as a choreographer à la Balanchine it is more important to be musical than to be an academically trained dancer. Anastos is musical both by instinct and by habit. His program notes (he writes them all himself) are invariably essays on the music and on musical culture. The music for the second pas de deux in "Gloria" is a barcarolle. Anastos has Hall perform a temps-lié sequence—a kind of stately rocking motion from side to side that, as he says, "sits on the music much as a boat sits on the water." He went on to explain that a barcarolle, from the Italian *barca* (boat) and *rollio* (roll), is supposed to reflect the rhythm of a gondola on the waves. I asked why he hadn't mentioned the boat metaphor in his note on Vivaldi. "Because I never tell the audience how they ought to see my work," he replied. "As a rule, I don't even tell the dancers. I did let Vicky know about 'barcarolle' because I thought it would feed her imagination. She already had the correct rhythm. And, besides, it's an interesting piece of information."

Anastos considers himself a Balanchine disciple, but even at his most derivative, as in his version, for Tulsa Ballet Theatre, of Stravinsky's Divertimento from "Le Baiser de la Fée," he is no mere copyist; he tells us what this music means to *him*. Anastos's choreography in relation to Balanchine's looks a little bit the way Stravinsky sounds in relation to Tchaikovsky—dry, hungry, finally overcome. Probably, Anastos's temperament is too stringent for romantic ballets like "Baiser" (and the emotionally juicy portions of "Cinderella"). It's his ballets to music by Rameau or Handel or Vivaldi, or to vintage American pop, that most truly reflect the lessons of the Master. Chief among these lessons is the attitude that Lincoln Kirstein defined as moral rigor. In his work Anastos presents himself modestly, as a craftsman. He relaxes his audience, then seduces it with the spontaneity and simplicity of his style. Some post-Balanchine choreographers build down from a battery of sophisticated technical devices. They know all the steps, but not the feelings they sprang from. Anastos builds up from good sense, sound instinct, breathability. The dancers look real: their intelligence is visible, their energy does not look as if it had all been disposed of beforehand. If his choreography isn't exceptionally novel, neither is it pompous; if at times it lacks subtlety, it is never without life. It is prevailingly light and pleasant, with an unwavering rhythmic impulse that draws you in.

In the humility of this approach, there is no pretense, no wish to disappear, even as the medieval artisan, from the audience's sight. Choreographers are autocrats, and Anastos is one of the most sturdily individualistic ones around. As an autodidact, he has maintained a constant watch over the progress of his craft, and likes discussing it for general edification. Early on, he wrote out his thoughts on choreography in the form of a not entirely serious article for the Los Angeles *Times*. It contained two key pieces of advice to young choreographers:

> 1) Always make your dancers look good. Stay away from overly ornamental configurations that vex and tire dancers. Dancers are not pretzels. If they were, ballets would come in bags.
>
> 2) Imitation is still the sincerest form of flattery; just be sure you steal from people like Balanchine and Ashton.

Neither of these suggestions is quite as easy to follow as it seems. And in Anastos's case learning-by-imitation meant absorbing not only living precedents but dead ones, too. When he was a fledgling choreographer with the Trockadero, he would often set himself the task of reproducing for purposes of parody defunct ballets—ballets known by reputation only. Actually, these reproductions were Anastos originals. One of his best was "Les Biches." Working from inside the Poulenc score, guided by photographs of the original 1924 Nijinska production and some coaching suggestions from Anton Dolin (this was long before the wave of "Les Biches" revivals got under way), he managed by some process of divination to bring off bitingly accurate effects that were more Nijinska than Nijinska. It was, of course, an all-boy "Biches," and amazingly successful as such, but its real secret lay in Anastos's intuition and in his tact: he knew enough not to exaggerate Nijinska's exaggerations.

THE Trockadero was Anastos's academy. It motivated and sharpened his wits, and it gave him a window on the world of ballet. He entered that world the only way he could—by jumping through the window. Although he has come a long way from the Trockadero—he hasn't even been to see it perform since he left—it does seem that he functioned more happily as its director than he has in the variety of situations he has occupied since. He had a company, an audience, and a

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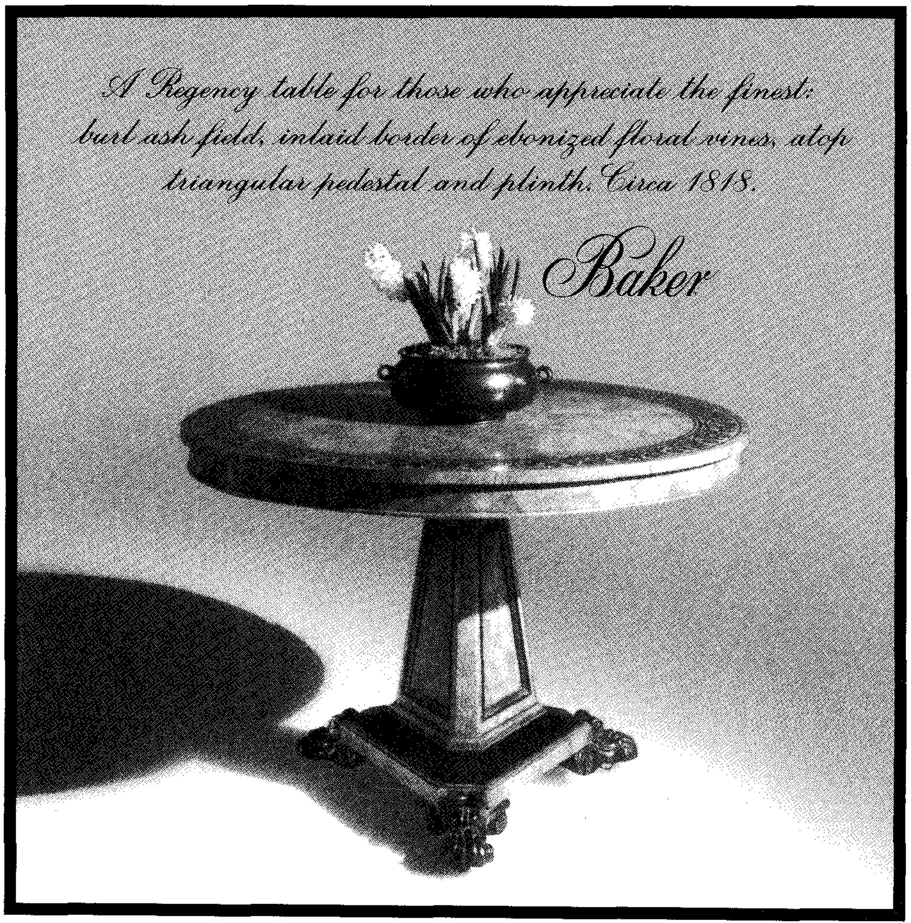
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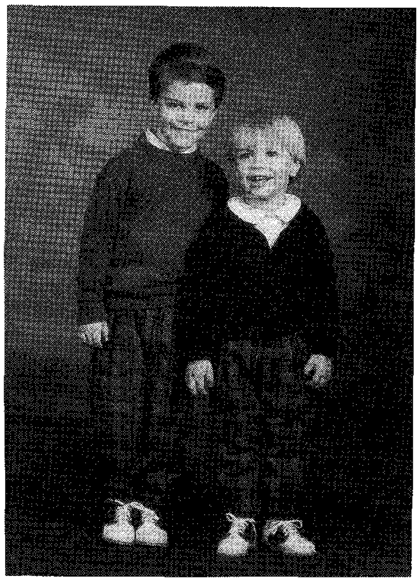
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rational budget; he was the boss, and he worked in New York. Some of the things he has done (for example, that Tulsa "Baiser") he might not have done in the same way if he hadn't been working so far from the center of ballet life in this country. In nearly every conversation I've had with him in the past two years, the question of venue has kept coming up. Not long ago, he was reviewing his A.B.T. experience, evidently an unhappy one. Since he made two ballets for the company, I was under the impression that he had been invited back after "Cinderella." (Being invited back after an initial commission is what guest choreographers dream about; then they dream about being asked to join the staff.) But Anastos said that the idea for his "Clair de Lune" had been proposed to him by Baryshnikov earlier, before either of them started "Cinderella."

"Misha's idea was that I should choreograph a ballet for Cynthia Gregory and Fernando Bujones that would show them as human beings with soul, not as virtuoso technicians. He wanted a piece specially built for them, but without any fouettés or turns in second. So I got out some Debussy and went to work. Cynthia did the first couple of performances and then dropped the ballet. Fernando turned up for as few rehearsals as possible. They didn't want to do it because it had no fouettés or turns in second. Other dancers did do it—Magali Messac was lovely. Robby La Fosse made something of it. Marianna Tcherkassky told me she got more fan mail on that ballet than on anything else she was dancing at the time. But it was too long a piece with too few people on the stage. I don't regret its being out of repertory."

Anastos paused and took a swallow of wine. We were sitting at the back table in his favorite Italian restaurant, and the light was shining down on his curate's pate. "And I don't regret what happened to 'Cinderella,' " he went on. "I don't even think about it anymore. If I do, it's just to mull over some technical point or other, and then I drop it and go on to something else—what's for dinner, or something like that. I just wish—I don't know. Maybe I blew my chances in New York."

Another swallow.

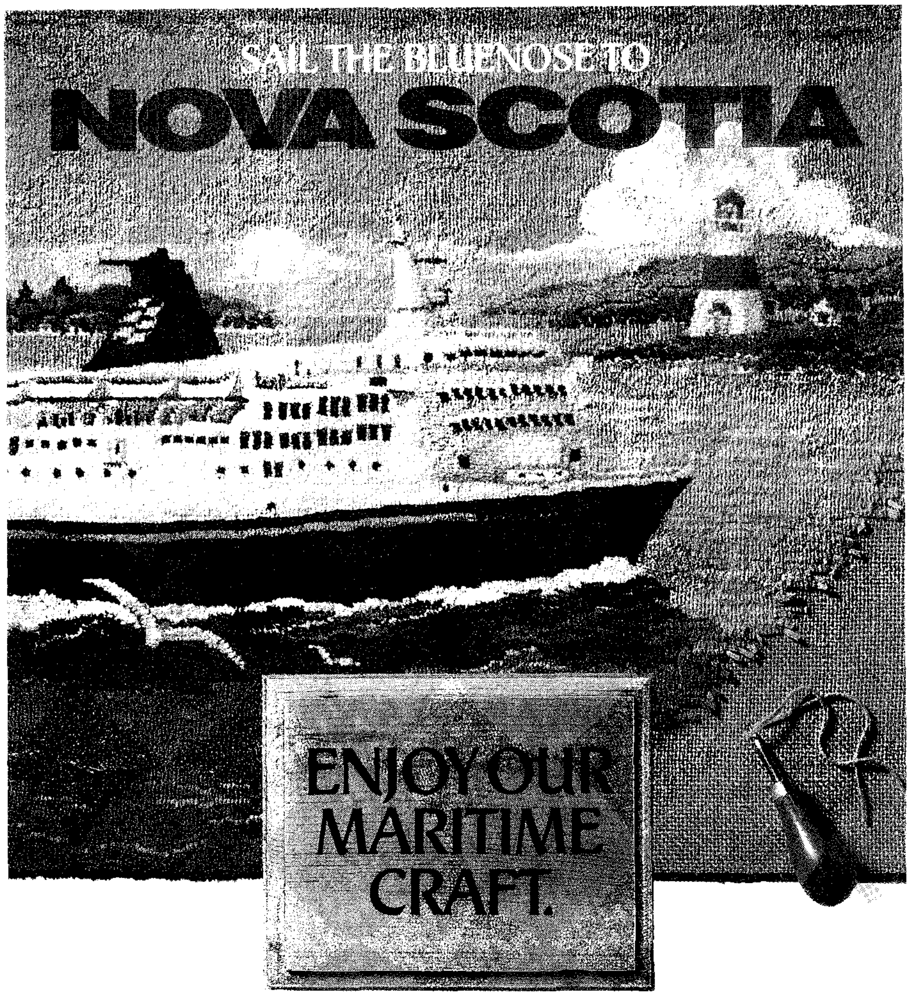
What about Broadway, I asked. Wasn't there a moment when he might have choreographed "La Cage aux Folles"? Anastos confirmed this. "I was invited to Jerry Herman's very luxe apartment in the East Sixties," he said. "Arthur Laurents was there. It was a torturous interview. Laurents said, 'You're from the ballet. Well, can you make a number that pays off?' He was pretty sure I couldn't. I said, 'Well, Arthur, haven't you seen "Swan Lake"? That's a number that pays off.' I've had a few nibbles since then. James Lapine, who lives down the street from me, invited me to choreograph 'Into the Woods,' but Sondheim went for Lar Lubovitch. I was involved for a while with a musical version of 'Around the World in Eighty Days,' which never got to New York. It was a nice, old-fashioned kind of show, conceived in numbers with dances, not with choreographic twists threading through every scene. I like the old approach; I'd much rather choreograph than direct. But the trend is away from choreography as such. Producers don't want someone who can construct a number—expose the material, develop it, make a finale. They'd much rather bring in someone who can conceptualize a whole show in terms of some other art. It's the era of the crossover director. I'm a crossover, actually, from ballet. At least, Arthur Laurents thinks so. Odd, isn't it? To the ballet world I'm an outsider, but to Arthur Laurents I'm from the ballet. And ballet is useless on Broadway now. The audience for the old-style Broadway musical hasn't vanished. It's out there. For every show that gets to Broadway there are a hundred on the road, living and dying, going through complete top-to-bottom transformations. Broadway taste doesn't really reflect the national picture. I worked for a couple of months on a 'concept musical' called 'Chess.' Not my kind of thing at all. I'm no postmodernist. Give me Jerome Kern."

Anastos loves sounding like a conservative almost as much as he loves looking like one, with his sober Armani suits and no-nonsense glasses. When he talks about "out there" and being "in America," it's with the relish of the dispossessed New Yorker sounding off. But I suspect he really adores the country he sees so much of. His postcards, particularly from the Southwest, arrive with thrilled messages written on them. He has amassed a library of guidebooks, which he conscientiously keeps up-to-date, and a vast collection of Latin-American religious art. He is patriotic about California wines. We go to the Italian restaurant because it serves a Vallejo red that he can't find in the liquor stores. Although he calls "The Gilded Bat" a "fluke hit—the right ballet for the right company at the right time," it pleased him to have a première in Salt Lake City and a tryout in Aspen. After the opening, last November 10th, at the Capitol Theatre, he flew to Dallas for Joan Sutherland's farewell stage performance in America. Culturally speaking, he thinks the country is looking good, especially west of the Mississippi.

"There's more going on out there than we ever hear about back East," he says. "When they put on a season in Tulsa—and they do something like thirty-eight weeks a year—that theatre is full. And it's all very serious between them and the audience. A kind of dialogue goes on. The company still has someplace to go and grow. That isn't happening in the East anymore. The excitement here has levelled out, and some companies are actually declining. The repertory is getting tame. Maybe there are no more crossover modern dancers to create premières." (This said with heavy irony.)

Anastos calls himself a popularly based choreographer, but what that actually means is that he does a lot of extra work. Invited by the Omaha Ballet to choreograph "Omaha Quadrille," he not only arranged a selection of nineteenth-century social dances, to authentic period tunes, he also spent hours at the local historical society researching Omaha social life from frontier days to the turn of the century. He then wrote, designed, and, at his own expense, published a twelve-page monograph, which was distributed as a souvenir at the première. To top things off, he put together a montage of historical photographs as a prologue to the ballet. "Omaha Quadrille" thus became something rare in Anastos's work—a site-specific piece, which cannot be reproduced elsewhere in the same form.

And then, of course, there's that most poetic of venues Newark, New Jersey. The Garden State Ballet operates on a budget of six hundred thousand dollars. Its annual seasons and its personnel keep shrinking; over the last three years, it has gone from twenty-two weeks and sixteen dancers to six-



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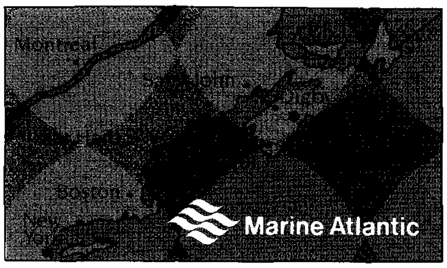

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teen weeks and fourteen dancers. This leaves Anastos with almost no time to choreograph ballets and rehearse them adequately. The dancers perform in school auditoriums and mostly rundown theatres around the state. They dance gallantly, but this is a company that was founded (by Fred Danieli) as an adjunct to a ballet school and never had a major effort behind it—no staff to market and present it as a professional institution. For the first performances of "Gloria," which took place in March in Montclair and Red Bank, Anastos succeeded in obtaining a chorus and orchestra. In Red Bank, the audience was under two hundred, less than half of what had been expected. In Tulsa, Atlanta, Salt Lake City, the audience is around two thousand. Furious, Anastos decided to inform the board that he would not renew his contract in August. A week later, he changed his mind, and the worst catastrophe in the company's history was averted.

Anastos's obligations as artistic director include a fair amount of fund-raising, which he enjoys. He is a skillful and willing administrator. But fundamentally he just likes to work. I was startled to discover that he is a baseball fan; he explained that he got interested in the game several years ago as a way of alleviating the "bone-crushing boredom" of being between jobs. "I used to think that what a choreographer did was to implement brilliant ideas of movement that came to him in his free time," he said. "Actually, the ideas come out of the movement. You don't progress unless you work." To free-lance full time is to live with discontinuity, compromise, lapsed momentum, finding interesting dancers to work with one season, losing contact with them the next. Conditions in the ballet business are extremely unsettled just now; viewed in that context, Anastos's job in Newark is probably not such a bad one.

So, ungrudgingly, he has resumed his routine. Each morning, he descends from the fifth-floor walkup in Greenwich Village that he shares with his companion of sixteen years, the painter William Edwards. He makes his way to the nearest subway entrance and takes a forty-minute train ride to downtown Newark. The ballet studios are housed in an old factory building with peeling walls and one rattletrap elevator, hand-operated by the janitor. The windows in the studios are covered with plastic sheets. When I arrive, on an early spring morning, Anastos is discussing with the janitor ways of cleaning the floor so that it will be less slippery; dancers have been falling down all week. The building is to get a new piece of equipment: a water heater. "We'll all feel a lot better if we can take hot showers," Anastos observes. As the dancers assemble, he divulges his plans for the fall: a two-act production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream," with choreography to Mendelssohn, but nothing like you-know-who's. Forty costumes ("Elizabethan, I think"), twenty children, four weeks of rehearsal. The budget of a hundred and seventy thousand dollars includes the cost of publicity. The board has hopes of restoring the twenty-two-week season. Meanwhile, there is the possibility of a new show based on Edward Gorey material, which Anastos will adapt and stage himself. And, farther off, there are projects he is hoping to realize: Strauss's "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme" as a pantomime ballet, with sexual cross-dressing, as in "Der Rosenkavalier" and "Figaro"; a ballet to the sixteenth-century Venetian composer Gabrieli, who wrote brass antiphonal music—"a kind of sixteenth-century stereophonic experience," Anastos says. "Very little known, very exciting."

He is in black practice clothes with a gray sweater tied around his waist, the picture of professional aplomb. Before the rehearsal begins, he adds one more thought. "Lincoln Kirstein said a choreographer is not really made until the age of forty. Well, I'm forty-two, and I'm ready to settle down. I think I've earned it." We both don't look at the dirty floor, the plastic-covered windows. Elizabeth Barrow, the ballet mistress, flips the switch on the tape machine, and the dancers start to move. Anastos watches intently. He has on his black-eyebrow glasses. In about forty-five seconds, he is on his feet making a correction. The dancers pick up from where they left off. Almost immediately, he stops them again. The starts and stops go on and on. The tedium of creation sets in. Today is the beginning of Anastos's sixteenth year as a choreographer, and his life is no different from what it has ever been.

—Arlene Croce

MONACO

EUROPE'S PRINCIPAL NATION

PRINCIPALITY OF MONACO

I am very pleased to introduce this special advertising section, "Monaco: Europe's Principal Nation." I hope the information here about the business and tourism climate in Monaco today, and about the International Yacht Club Challenge co-sponsored by the Yacht Club de Monaco and the Manhattan Yacht Club, will entice you to visit the Principality, whether for business or pleasure, in the very near future.

Albert de Monaco

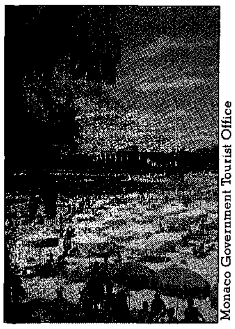
H.S.H. Prince Albert de Monaco

Anthony Holmes

Photos courtesy of Monaco Government Tourist Office

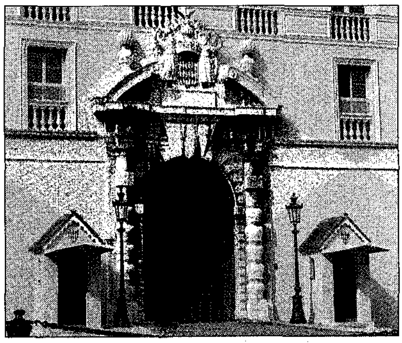
Anthony Holmes

Nestled on the Mediterranean and surrounded by the French Alpes Maritimes, the Principality of Monaco is an urban metropolis enclosed in a semicircle of mountains meeting the sea. This very unusual geography accounts for Monaco's most valued asset — a microclimate pocket insuring year-round pleasant temperatures, mild weather, and ninety per cent sunshine.


Monaco Government Tourist Office

Monaco's beaches are justifiably famous

Once all but isolated from nearby neighbors by its mountainous backdrop — Italy lies a mere seven and a half miles to the east; the city of Nice, eleven miles west — today the Principality is within easy reach. Nice–Côte d'Azur International Airport (at most, two hours by air from all major European cities) is only twenty minutes away by road, or six minutes by helicopter.


Monaco Government Tourist Office/Anthony Holmes

The Grimaldi coat of arms adorns the palace

Monaco has been ruled by the Grimaldi family since 1297. The reigning prince, H.S.H. Rainier III, ascended the throne in 1949. In 1956, he married the American actress Grace Kelly, who died in 1982. Their three children, Princess Caroline, Hereditary Prince Albert, and Princess Stephanie, are today deeply involved in the affairs of the Principality.

This small country continues to grow — upward and outward: On Monaco's eastern end, Monte Carlo now extends into a city of modern high rises and flows into the Mediterranean along the sparkling Larvotto beaches. On the county's western end, land reclaimed from the sea has added twenty-two hectares to Fontvieille, creating a new business and residential center. In the past twenty years, coastal reclamation has increased Monaco's land area by twenty per cent.

The growth of Monaco's economy is evidenced in its balanced budgets and its importance in international business and business tourism. Indeed, much of the development in Fontvieille and Larvotto is conceived to accommodate the international business community in addition to traditional tourist interests.

No description of Monaco could be complete without mentioning casino gambling and the total lack of personal income taxes. It was the successful introduction of casino games in Monaco in 1866 that led Prince Charles III in 1869 to abolish income taxes. Today, there is still no personal income tax, yet only four per cent of state revenues derive from gambling — over seventy-five per cent of revenues now come from corporate sources, taxes on commercial transactions, and state service monopolies.

Financial services have a particularly strong presence in the Monégasque commercial sector. The thirty-five banks doing business in this country of twenty-nine thousand residents offer the most sophisticated services available today and are poised to capitalize on the opportunities that will be presented in Europe after 1992.

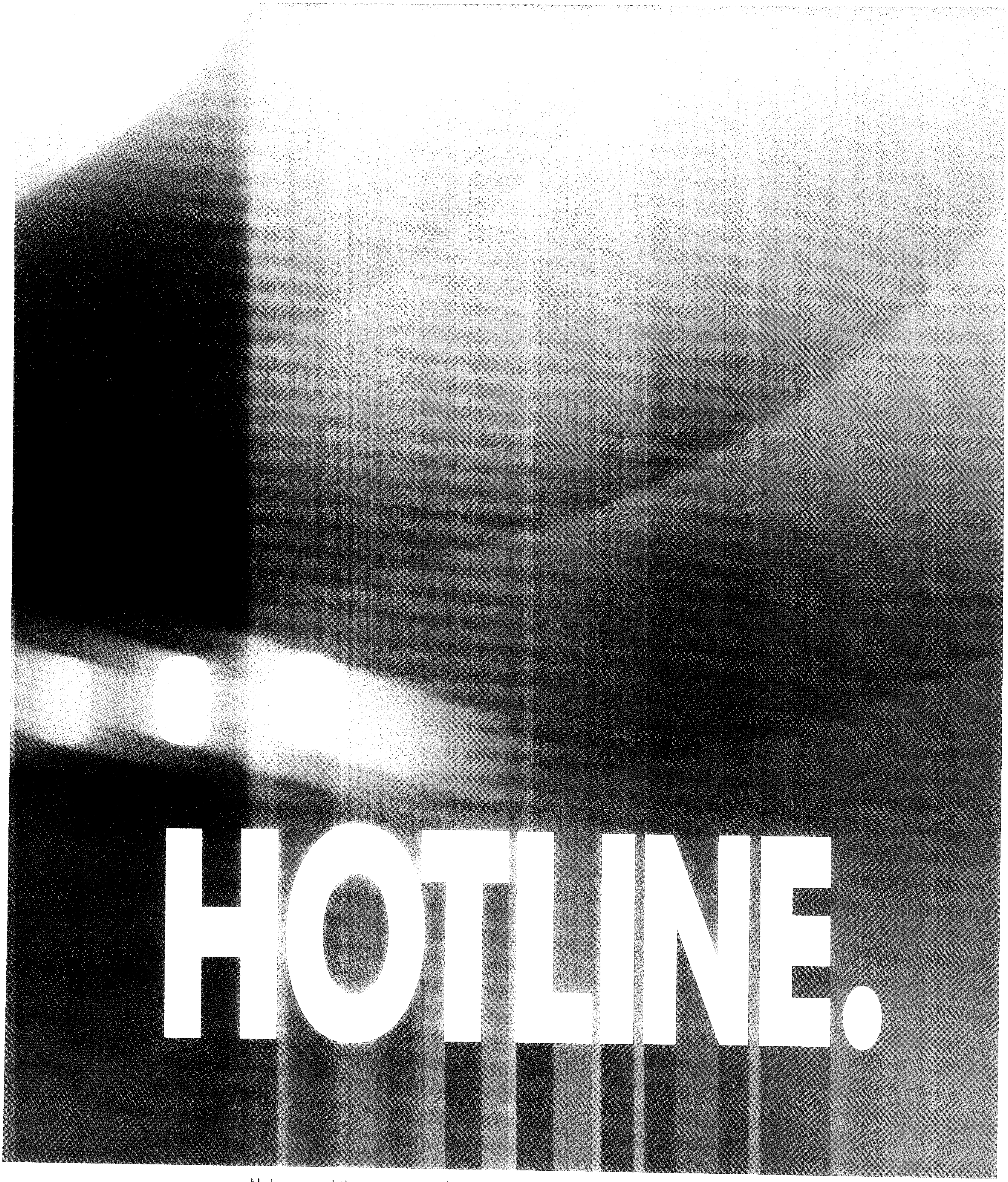
With a twenty-seven per cent share of the economic activity of the Principality, light industry plays a heavy role. Monaco today supports a thriving industrial sector, particularly in pharmacology (most notably, cosmetics), plastics, and electronics. Industrial expansion, however, has not taken place at the expense of environmental quality. But opportunities for investment and for establishing new facilities provide substantial attraction for light industry.

Monaco Government Tourist Office/Anthony Holmes

The glittering Casino houses recently restored gaming rooms as well as the Opera

This small country continues to grow — upward and outward.

In Monaco, business, art, and entertainment meet and blend together. The Monte Carlo Convention Center and Auditorium, with a rooftop work of art by Maître Vasarely, is a four-story building overhanging



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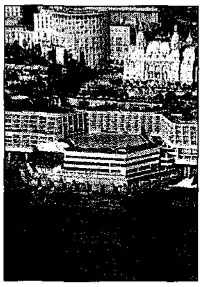
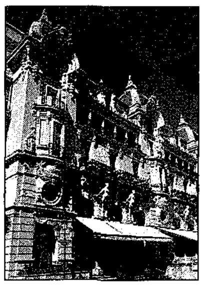
the Mediterranean encompassing over nineteen thousand square feet of meeting and exhibition space with conference and meeting rooms, an auditorium seating eleven hundred, and a winter garden overlooking the sea. The International Conference Center is a somewhat smaller facility, located in the same building as the Princess Grace Theatre, with eighty-five hundred square feet of exhibition space. The Winter Sporting Club, fronting the Casino Gardens, also offers meeting and exhibition rooms of various sizes. Monaco's newest convention and cultural center, now being built near the western end of the Larvotto beaches, is scheduled for completion in 1993. Conference or convention planning is greatly simplified here: all aspects, from hotel accommodation to meeting facilities to social events, can be coördinated through the Monaco Government Tourist and Convention Bureau.


Monaco Government Tourist Office

New buildings in Monte Carlo

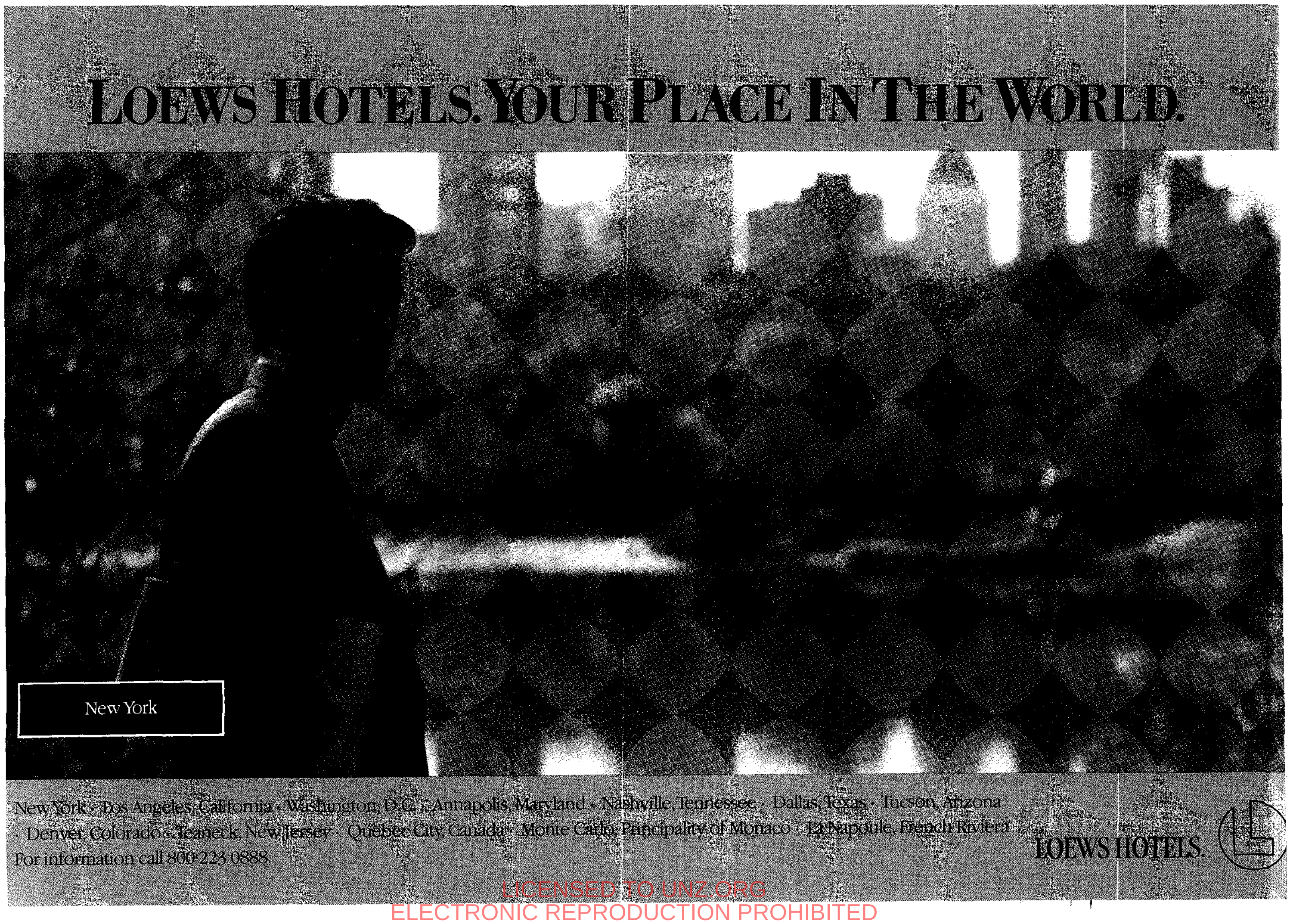
The close proximity of so many leisure and cultural activities, an exceptionally mild climate, and a setting of great natural beauty combine with almost a century and a half of experience in welcoming visitors to make Monaco an ideal tourist locale. It was in the mid-nineteenth century that Monaco's Prince Charles III founded the Société des Bains de Mer to open a casino, hotel, and sea-bathing establishment. Today, the Principality boasts hotels in every price range, including six in the four-star luxury category, as well as numerous recreational, entertainment, and sports venues.

The first building erected by the Société des Bains de Mer on the rocky plateau renamed Monte Carlo — and the first electrified building in the world — was the Casino, which was soon followed by the grand Hôtel de Paris and the Hôtel Hermitage, three fine examples of Belle Epoque architecture. The magnificent Casino is worth a visit, whether or not you plan to test Lady Luck.



The façade of the Hôtel de Paris

It is on the Rock, in Monaco-Ville, that some of the most interesting tourist sites are to be found. Here is the Old Town, with its close, winding, and traffic-free streets,



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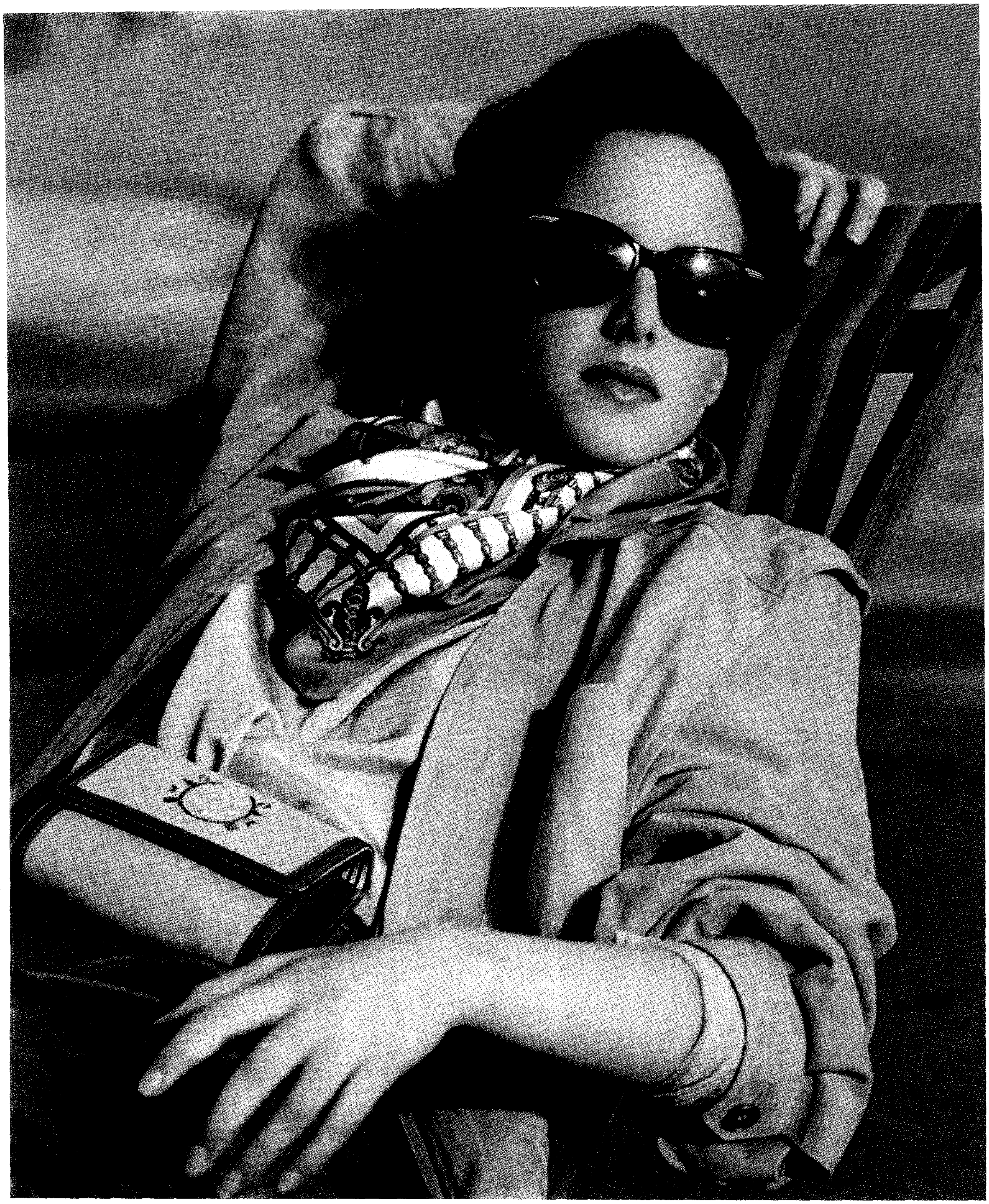

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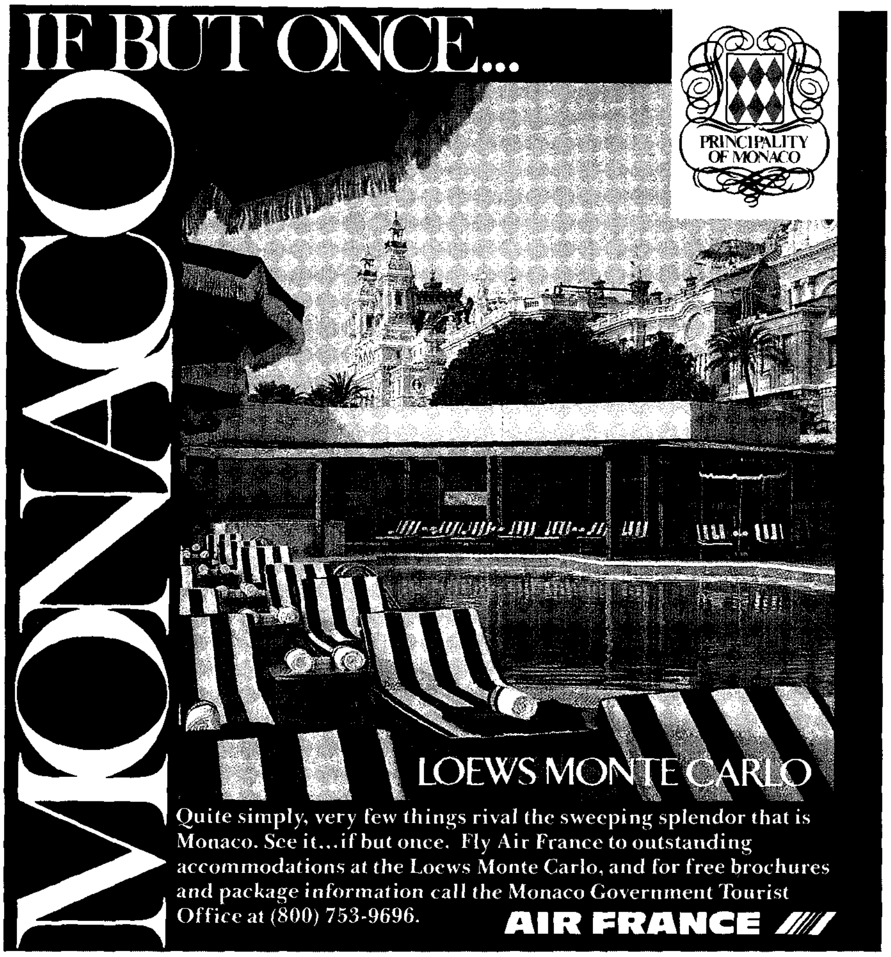

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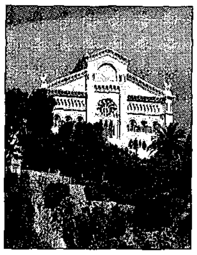
where the pace and flavor of Mediterranean culture is most evident. Two small museums devoted to Monégasque history are located here, as is the Palais du Prince, the centuries-old home of the princes of Monaco where the sovereign family still lives today.


Monaco Cathedral sits atop the Rock

At the southern tip of the Rock, overlooking the sea, is the Oceanography Museum and Aquarium; the honorary director is the famed underwater explorer Jacques Cousteau. A short walk brings you to the Monaco Cathedral, built in 1875 on the site of the thirteenth-century Church of Saint Nicholas. The ambulatory contains tombs of former princes of Monaco and some of their family members. Princess Grace is also buried here.

High on the steep rocky cliff above Monaco-Ville — four hundred and ninety-two feet high, to be exact — is the entrance to the Jardin Exotique, the largest garden of succulent plants in the world and the only one of its kind in Europe. Below the cliff sits the beautiful Fontvieille Park and the Princess Grace Rose Garden, where thirty-five hundred rose bushes of over a hundred and fifty different varieties surround a statue of Princess Grace with the Mediterranean as backdrop.

Springtime brings Monaco's annual Spring of the Arts, a four-week international arts festival of classical music, theatre, opera, and ballet presented in halls throughout the Principality. But arts festivals of every description take place in Monaco throughout the year — indeed, one would find it hard to visit this country when such an event was not taking place. Each winter brings the International Circus Festival, held under the permanent big top in Fontvieille. In summer, the night skies are lit by the dazzling displays over Monaco's harbor of the International Fireworks Festival. And every night, cabaret and floor shows featuring big-name stars from Europe and the United States offer world-renowned entertainment.

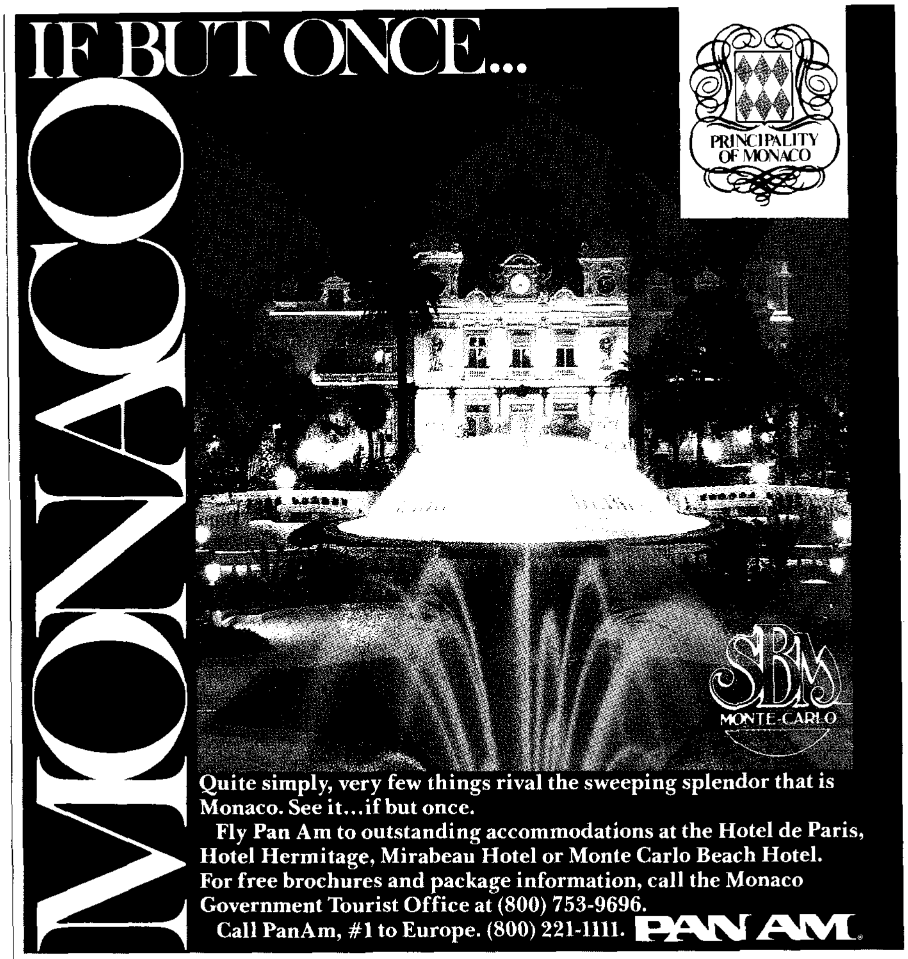
A number of major sporting events also fill Monaco' s calendar. The Monte Carlo Volvo Open international tennis championship is held here, as is the Monte Carlo Golf Open. In May the streets of the Principality become a raceway for the Monaco Grand Prix. And there is always an exciting calendar of events at the Yacht Club de Monaco.

In October, the International Yacht Club Challenge will be held for the first time in Monaco. The first Challenge was organized by the Manhattan Yacht Club in 1988, and Monaco became coörganizer in 1989, when the Challenge was again held in New York Harbor. Alternating with New York, the yearly event will be hosted every other year in Monaco. The International Yacht Club Challenge exists to foster "international goodwill through friendly competition." The Challenge will take place this year from October 18th through the 21st, including three days of racing using J/24 class craft. A unique aspect of the International Yacht Club Challenge is that the J/24 craft and new sails are supplied to all competing teams by the host club.

Monaco's streets are the course for its Grand Prix

The International Yacht Club Challenge is more then just a sporting event. It is, as well, a spectacle and an opportunity for participants, sponsors, and spectators to come together socially in the spirit of international goodwill the Challenge represents.

CAROL-JUNE CASSIDY IS A WRITER AND EDITOR BASED IN NEW YORK CITY.



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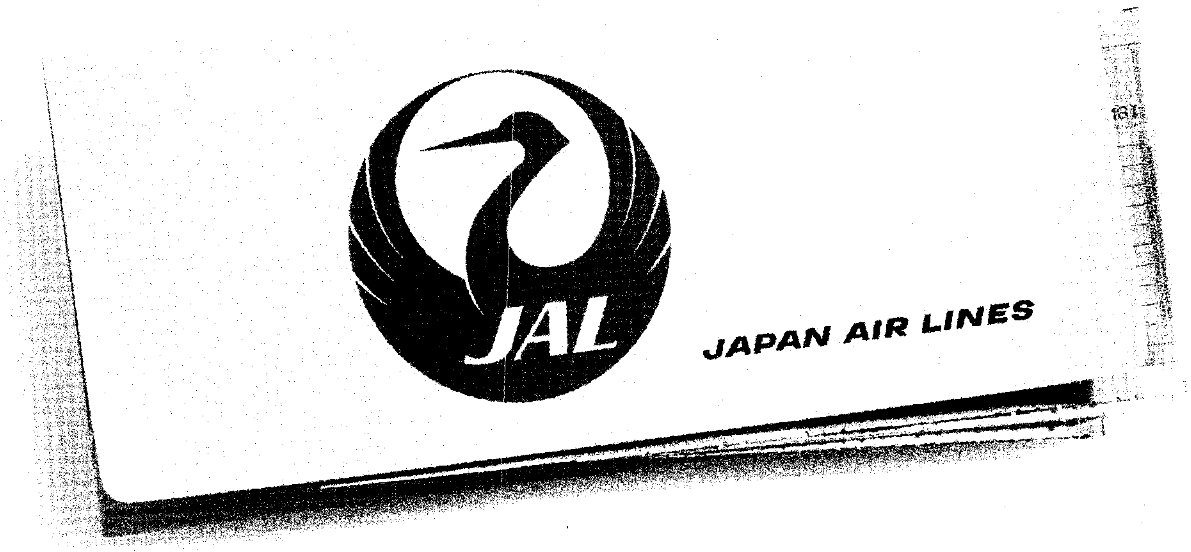

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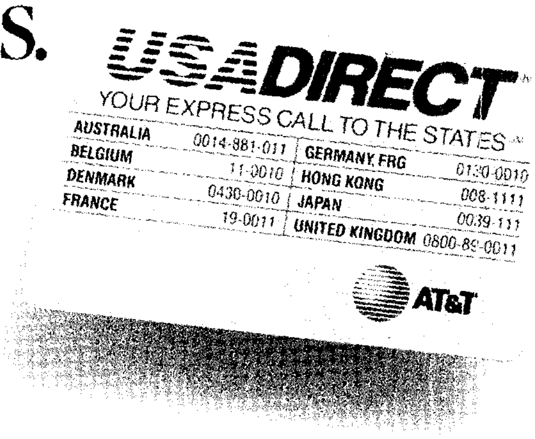

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A REPORTER AT LARGE

AN OPEN ADOPTION—II

LEE and Dan Stone were in the hospital room when Peggy Bass gave birth to Rebecca, whom they planned to adopt. The Stones (their names and some other names and identifying details have been changed) attended the birth as a result of open adoption, in which the birth mother (or the birth parents) and the adoptive parents meet and sometimes develop continuing relationships, and the birth parents sometimes become like an aunt and an uncle to the adopted child. In the nineteen-sixties and seventies, the central debate in the adoption world concerned open, or accessible, records, and whether adoptees had the right to information that might help them find their birth parents. In the past fifteen years, the search movement, as the group that advocated this right called itself, expanded into something much bigger. It focussed on how adoptees should relate to birth parents and how birth and adoptive parents should relate, and called into question the confidentiality that had been an integral part of adoptions in this country for the previous three generations.

The case for open adoption is now most often made as a series of accepted maxims: Open adoption enables a birth mother to resolve her guilt and grief about giving up the baby, since she knows that the child is all right and that the adoptive parents are loving ones. It allows adoptive parents to replace fantasies about their child's background with accurate details, and to deal more honestly with themselves and with their child about the adoption. Most important, it permits adoptees to come to terms with a basic element of their identity, since they know their biological roots and why they were placed for adoption, and they can move beyond the secrecy and the sense of rejection that can accompany conventional adoptions.

The evidence in support of these statements is in part anecdotal but in increasing part scholarly. The new scholarly work concerns the psychological effects of adoption on the adopted children in particular. The Census Bureau reports that the United States has about five million living adoptees, which is to say that adoptees make up about two per cent of this country's population. However, adopted children make up about five per cent of the outpatients and between ten and fifteen per cent of the inpatients at mental-health facilities. According to Kent Ravenscroft, who teaches psychiatry at the Georgetown University School of Medicine and has reviewed recent clinical studies, adoptees show aggression more often than non-adoptees do, more often have feelings of rootlessness and low self-esteem, and have more learning problems. They are more likely to be depressed, to lie, steal, or run away.

The explanation for the statistical discrepancy lies, in part, in nature: among other things, the birth mother is often a teen-ager, whose poor prenatal care, use of drugs or alcohol during pregnancy, or complicated delivery exacts a continuing toll. But a prominent adoption scholar, David Brodzinsky, of Rutgers University, contends that the cause for some, and perhaps many, of these problems can be traced to the adoption experience. "For adoptees, part of them is hurt at having once been relinquished. That part remains vulnerable for the rest of their lives as they grieve at various predictable points for the unknown parents who gave them away."

The extreme expression of such difficulties, Arthur Sorosky, a psychiatrist, and David Kirschner, a clinical psychologist, have found, is an "adopted-child syndrome," marked by rebellion, truancy, sexual promiscuity, and trouble with the law. According to their theory, the syndrome can lead to rage that occasionally erupts in violent crimes committed by adoptees like David Berkowitz, known as Son of Sam. Perhaps the foremost popularizer of the syndrome notion is Betty Jean Lifton, an adoptee and writer, for whom open adoption is an urgent cause. In "Lost & Found: The Adoption Experience," she states, "The sad truth remains that all Adoptees have had a difficult struggle to put together an authentic self; many lead diminished or unfulfilled lives. Whether or not one wants to use the word *syndrome*, the dilemma of being adopted touches everyone. As Kirschner points out, only by facing the realities and the risks do we have a chance of preventing the syndrome from developing, and of effectively treating it when it occurs."

Acceptance or rejection of the concept of the adopted-child syndrome dramatically divides the adoption world, splitting even advocates of open adoption. A syndrome describes a seri-

ous mental illness, critics of the notion say, and studies that seem to support the existence of this new one don't account for other possible causes of extreme behavior, like child abuse, or moves to and from unsatisfactory foster homes before adoption. Studies on which the syndrome is based have rarely distinguished between those adopted in early infancy and those adopted later, who are more likely to have suffered such trauma. Critics of the syndrome idea see it as a theatrical and irresponsible notion, which sacrifices a balanced portrait of adoptees in general by using the difficulties of a small group to promote open adoption.

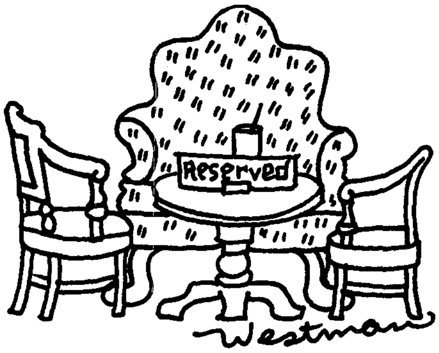
According to a wide range of adoption experts, the defects in the syndrome studies are similar to those in adoption research in general. Because most adoption records remain closed (only two states maintain open adoption records, but at least one more is now considering the policy), no one knows precisely how many adoptees there are in the United States, and it is therefore impossible for a researcher to take a true random sample as a control for a study of adoptees. The main adoption studies come out of mental-health clinics, and reflect the mental states of groups in clinics rather than those in the wider population; for a variety of reasons, adoptive parents turn to such services more readily than other parents, and the problems of at least some of the young adoptees in clinics which are attributed to adoption almost certainly have other causes as well.

To avoid these statistical pitfalls, researchers are now focussing on adoptees outside clinics. According to Ravenscroft, such adoptees tend to score lower on tests of academic achievement and social skills than do non-adoptees, and to have more behavioral problems. One researcher found that some adopted women, perhaps as a result of not knowing about their own birth, experienced a slowdown in labor during their first childbirth. Another learned that almost every adopted woman who has considered searching or who has searched for her birth mother fantasizes about what her birth mother is like and, less often, about why she was given up. As part of a quest, it seems, some young single adopted women become pregnant four and five times.

Enough adoptees, men and women, have suffered from confusion about their identities that Harold J. Sants, a British psychiatrist, has labelled the phenomenon "genealogical bewilderment." It is defined as a state in which adoptees have an identity shaped by what they look like, the family and circumstances they grow up in, and what they accomplish, and yet wonder who their birth parents are and what their lives would have been like with them.

Joyce Maguire Pavao, who directs a team of adoption counsellors at the Family Center in Somerville, Massachusetts, and who is herself an adoptee, argues that adoptees face unusual challenges in development, and that these are often misdiagnosed as problems. Grasping the meaning of being adopted, grieving for the loss of a life in a biological family, shaping an identity while reckoning with the added dimension of genealogical bewilderment—these amount to extra psychological work that adoptees have to do. The challenges are evident in routine circumstances. Daydreaming is part of this effort, Pavao observes, but is often misdiagnosed in adoptees as an illness called attention-deficit disorder, and is mistreated with drugs. In her view, theories of personality development should be reorganized under three headings: normal, adoption normal, and abnormal.

An essential question for adoptees is: Where do I belong? Some feel that they do not belong anywhere, or that they belong somewhere else. More than a few young adoptees believe that they have come from outer space, since they weren't born to their adoptive mothers. But even if the question of belonging is understood to be double-edged—one goal of human development, after all, is self-possession—adoptees not uncommonly feel set apart. Frustrated at not knowing their biological roots, and at being the only American adults who are prevented by law from being given information that is literally the birthright of others, some adoptees feel that they are enslaved by a perverse system, and are being treated like children long after they have become adults. Adopted children sometimes ask, "How much did I cost?"



In a conventional adoption, the child may blame the adoptive parents for withholding information that they don't have. The adoptive parents often criticize themselves for not being able to prevent crises in their child's life, which are caused by things that are out of their own control. After surrendering a child and feeling that it is wrong to talk about the loss, birth parents find themselves in the same limbo state as that child—a state that Leston Havens, a psychiatrist at the Harvard Medical School, recently described at an adoption-reform conference as "unable to announce themselves to the world in the fullest sense." Some birth mothers (in one study, thirty-eight per cent) trusted the word of social workers that they would forget about their babies but never did, and have failed to get pregnant again. Some describe the loss of the child as an amputation. Some adoptive parents, having been led to believe that their family lives would be no different from others', pull back in anger when their children act hostile and push them away. Some adoptees, bearing the scar of their own relinquishment, have an especially hard time dealing with intimacy, with separation, and with loss.

Open adoption is now seen by its supporters as a way to ease these troubles, and of acknowledging, as H. David Kirk argued in "Shared Fate," in 1964, that adoptive families are—and have to be—different from biological families. (Like others who have written about adoption, including me, Kirk had a personal interest: he was an adoptive father, as I am.) Most of the evidence about the success of open adoption during the past decade is lore passed along the grapevine of supporters. In the best circumstances, birth parents and adoptive parents feel a measure of control they would not have otherwise. Adoptees treat their adoption as "a big ho-hum," according to Sharon Kaplan, a proponent of a form of open adoption called coöperative adoption. In coöperative adoption, birth parents occasionally babysit for their birth children, and birth parents and adoptive parents sometimes go

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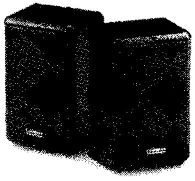

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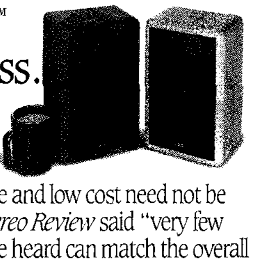

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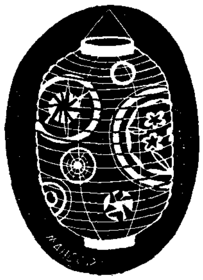
camping together with the adoptee. In open adoption, when adoptive children are asked to draw their family tree in school, they draw an orchard. Kathleen Silber, the co-author (with Phylis Speedlin) of a 1983 book titled "Dear Birthmother," reports that adoptive parents who meet the birth mothers of their children feel as if "they have finally been given permission to be the parents and that they actually bond quicker with the baby, having met the birthmother."

Adults involved in the most open adoptions have invented rituals to celebrate the events. A birth mother and an adoptive mother shop together for the outfit the baby will wear home from the hospital. An adoptive family has a welcoming ceremony for the child in which the birth parents take part. The birth mother and adoptive mother wear halves of a necklace that together spell the baby's name.

Though data on such rituals go back only a decade or so, some nineteen-fifties studies of older children provide long-standing support for advocates of open adoption. They, too, found that an adoption was improved by a child's continued involvement with his biological family. One study concluded, "His keeping in touch with his relatives often strengthens adoptive relationships; the child knows his adoptive parents not only accept him, but that which belongs to him." The benefits to older children, the argument now goes, also apply to children adopted as infants. The most widespread practice of open adoption may be in black American communities, where there is a long tradition of informal adoption of children by relatives.



Perhaps the most startling claim for open adoption is not so much stories or studies as history. In a recent essay on open adoption, Annette Baran and Reuben Pannor, the California social workers who with the psychiatrist Arthur Sorosky formally proposed the concept in 1976, assert, "There was no thought of secrecy or anonymity during the first two centuries of adoption in the United States." The colonies imported English orphans for farm labor, and those children were adopted by communities, as apprentices and members of extended families. When an unmarried woman became pregnant, and needed a couple to take care of her during the pregnancy, she would look for one who might give the child a home. The birth mother and the prospective adopters thus came to know and accept each other. If the couple adopted the baby, they alone reared it, "but, emotionally, there was room for the birth parent." Frequently the birth mother's own extended family took her in and "decided which relatives would adopt the child." Often all relationships were open. In the late nineteenth century, newspapers routinely reported the details of adoption proceedings. Adoptees could obtain copies of their birth certificates. Early adoption laws included no provisions for confidentiality. It was not until the nineteen-twenties that states drew the veil of confidentiality over adoptions.

"THE greatest foe of open adoption today," according to one advocate of open adoption, is William Pierce, a former senior staff member of the Child Welfare League of America, who is now the president of a lobbying organization for conventional adoption agencies called the National Committee for Adoption. Pierce describes open adoption as "very dangerous, tragic, and disastrous," and since 1980 he has been a tenacious critic of the practice. In Pierce's eyes, the history of American adoption is a morality tale whose darkest hour is open adoption. "The United States was a polyglot nation of poor immigrants with few illusions about their roots," he says. "Adoption bloomed in the American environment." According to Pierce, American law embraced confidentiality as a means of protecting the best interests of adopted children: it gave them new birth certificates as a foundation for a life without the taint of illegitimacy. In the nineteen-twenties and thirties, when infertility was seen as a curse of God and a birth out of wedlock marked the parents as disreputable and the child as a "bad seed," confidentiality laws gave all the parties to an adoption a new beginning.

As Pierce sees it, the benefits of the law were enhanced by good works. A New York pharmaceutical manufacturer named Charles Crittenton, for example, had a sense of mission about service to women in peril, and, in 1883, founded the first of a series of Crittenton maternity homes. By 1909, when he died, there were sixty or so of these, and they helped young birth mothers place their babies and learn how to lead useful lives. The maternity homes taught young women how to be self-sacrificing, Pierce believes, and so became essential to American adoption. As he sees it, a turning point came in 1954, when Brown v. Board of Education, the landmark school-desegregation case, led to calls for the desegregation of the homes, and they "died out because they couldn't accommodate integration." (In 1966, there were two hundred and one maternity homes in this country; by 1981, the number had dropped to ninety-nine.) Adoption agencies took their place, and as the new institutions became "professionalized," and social workers felt it a duty to ask whether pregnant young women were sure they wanted to place their babies, "the unintended consequence was that adoption was less often considered an option."

Other circumstances reinforced the new skepticism that potential birth mothers felt about adoption, according to Pierce. In the nineteen-fifties and sixties, the Catholic Charities had trouble finding enough couples to adopt the babies whom agencies had available for placement. Non-Christians usually couldn't adopt through these agencies, for a dozen states had laws requiring agencies to place babies with parents whose religion was that which the birth mothers chose on behalf of their biological children. Jewish couples therefore turned to lawyers for help with independent adoptions. Black-market "baby-selling" gave independent adoptions a bad name. (Independent adoptions tend to cost more than agency adoptions; baby-selling—the sale of babies for very high sums—has recurred in cycles in this country since the late nineteenth century, and occurs almost exclusively through independent arrangements.) But in 1955, when Senator Estes Kefauver, Democrat of Tennessee, wanted to outlaw independent adoptions, Senator Jacob Javits, Republican of New York, according to Pierce, "stopped him by saying, 'My constituents won't be able to adopt.' " (The National Committee for Adoption estimates that a third of unrelated adoptions—of children not related to their adoptive families—now done in the United States are independent. Some experts say the fraction is half, and one claims that the figure is closer to four out of five. Independent adoptions remain difficult to assess because, except in the states where they are illegal, they are, by and large, minimally regulated. They can happen much faster than agency adoptions and can have happy endings. They also have a greater chance of falling through or breaking down, with no money-back guarantee, and they tend to be associated with the darkest adoption stories.) Eventually, the birth-control pill, the rise of feminism, and the legalization of abortion diminished the supply of babies for adoption, and, at the same time, a rise in infertility in the largest American generation of potential parents increased the demand. Lawyers in the field who offered some contact between birth mothers and adoptive parents caused some agencies to change their ways. By Pierce's account, the number of unrelated adoptions rose from thirty-three thousand eight hundred in 1951 to eighty-nine thousand two hundred in 1970, and has since levelled off at fifty thousand a year.

The official position of Pierce on behalf of the National Committee for Adoption is that open adoption is "an untried, untested mutation of an institution that has worked for large numbers of people for decades." To Pierce, the advocates of open adoption "may be guilty of malpractice" by claiming that "confidential adoption is pathological" and "has created a large class of children and adults who are emotionally ill, or at least quite confused." In support of Pierce's view, some studies conclude that adoptees are "significantly more confident and view others more positively than their non-adopted peers," and that being adopted doesn't necessarily lead to "heightened stress" in adolescence. Pierce offers a list of accomplished adopted Americans (former President Gerald Ford; Dave Thomas, the founder of the Wendy's fast-food chain; and several Olympic-medal winners, including the diver Greg Louganis, the skater Scott Hamilton, and the pairs skaters Peter and Kitty Carruthers) to support the slogan "Adopted kids have great expectations."

In a textbook called "Child Welfare Services," Alfred Kadushin, a professor emeritus of social work at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, and Judith A. Martin, an associate professor of social work at the University of Pittsburgh, provide a thorough review of adoption studies. Their summary generally supports Pierce. Two of every three conventional adoptions were judged "unequivocally successful," more than four out of five were in the acceptable or successful range, and fewer than one out of five were "failures." According to Kadushin and Martin, the failure rate for independent adoptions (twenty-five per cent) seems to be higher than for agency adoptions (fifteen per cent). While the number of adopted children at mental-health clinics is disproportionately high, the authors comment, it "may be lower than that which we have a right to expect, given the insults to psychic health that many adopted children have endured." In any case, adult adoptees use psychiatric facilities no more, proportionately, than do non-adoptees.

Where the advocates of open adoption see value, Pierce sees risk. For birth mothers, Pierce contends, the message of open adoption is that you can give up your baby without needing to separate from it, and so "have it both ways." To Pierce, the message is an illusion with sad consequences. Birth mothers don't view their children as lost, don't mourn the loss, and, however positive the recognition they enjoy for their instrumental role in the adoption, they fail to move on with their lives. The risk to adoptive parents is that their relationship with the birth mother will jeopardize their bond with the child, make them feel shame about their infertility, feel guilt about taking the child, and feel like caretakers standing in for the birth mother. Continued association with the birth mother can make them concerned about whether she approves of how they are bringing up the child. Or, if they come to have a poor opinion of the birth mother, it can infect their view of the child. As for the adopted child, contact with the birth mother can backfire, creating a sense of rejection by her and raising anxiety about her taking "her child" back or about the adoptive parents abandoning "their child."

Papers by a team of social workers with St. Mary's Services, an Episcopal child-welfare agency in Chicago, support these contentions. They found that for birth mothers open adoption is a complex and sometimes deceptive

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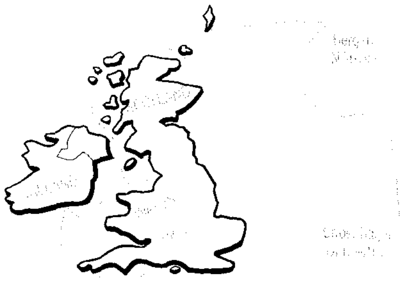

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When Pierce appears on TV shows to talk about adoption, he is by turns sober, fractious, and self-righteous. His style can rankle even those who agree with him, and they sometimes wish that an advocate with a less insistent way of promoting conventional adoption occasionally drew the spotlight. Pierce specializes in the attention-grabbing analogy, comparing the purchase of black-market babies to buying cocaine, and claiming that it is easier to get a child through an independent adoption than to get a dog from the pound.

Pierce suggests that the word "open" currently wears a white hat and steers a team of horses named honesty, tolerance, acceptance, and fairness. The word "closed," which is used by open-adoption advocates in place of "conventional," "traditional," or "confidential," wears an eye patch and a leer, and follows a set of mules named secrecy, narrow-mindedness, punishment, and prejudice. It is a particular frustration for Pierce that the concept of openness in adoption is so loose. In his view, open adoption was well defined by Annette Baran and her colleagues when they proposed that its core is identifying information, which means that the birth parents and the adoptive parents know one another's names and, often, where to find one another. Thus, he maintains, the absolute confidentiality that made American adoptions successful for generations is in jeopardy.

Pierce resents the elasticity of the "openness" concept because he thinks that it misappropriates, to the credit of open adoption, changes that have taken place during the past fifteen years in conventional adoption. On this point, Pierce enjoys wide support among believers in conventional adoption. The team from St. Mary's Services wrote, "To our knowledge, secret or closed adoption, where no information is provided to birth parents and adoptive parents about the other, has not been part of good agency practice for years. In conventional adoptions, all nonidentifying and medical data regarding the parents is exchanged between adoptive and biological parents through the agency." Birth mothers play a role in picking the kind of family they want their children to go to, if not in the specific final selection, which, according to the St. Mary's team, is best made by trained professionals. Conventional agencies discourage contact between birth mothers and their babies after placement, until the child turns eighteen and both express a wish to meet, but they encourage young adopted children to visit the agency, and to talk with birth mothers other than their own and learn why they are planning to give up their babies. Conventional agencies sympathetically counsel birth and adoptive parents about each other's fear, pain, and perspective.

If the extremes in adoption are absolute confidentiality and the exchange of identifying information (coöperative adoption being a rare form), the evolution in conventional adoption has not yet taken it as far as the middle ground. While some agencies that belong to the National Committee for Adoption have quietly broken ranks with Pierce on this issue, he disapproves of many of the steps taken in what is sometimes called semi-open adoption: "an exchange of nonidentifying information, pictures, letters, gifts, and possibly one face-to-face meeting involving no exchange of identities," according to a consensus definition written by Ruth G. McRoy, a professor of social work, Harold Grotevant, a professor of child development, and Kerry White, a researcher in child development, at the University of Texas. Pierce discourages as a form of coercion one-time face-to-face meetings between potential birth mothers and prospective adopters. He thinks the harm that could result from an exchange of letters outweighs the potential good. "A very fine birth mother with poor penmanship might be judged harshly and unfairly as being 'sloppy' or 'stupid' by the adoptive parents or others," he says. The same goes for gifts. What if a family has two adopted children, and the birth mother of one sends "a hand-knitted baby cap" while the other sends "a diamond-studded cross that's a family heirloom"? he asks. Won't the gifts make the children feel unequal?

Pierce says that open adoption is like the synthetic hormone DES, which was used from the mid-nineteen-forties to 1971 to keep pregnant women from miscarrying but resulted in difficulties for many of their daughters in carrying fetuses to term and, for some, in vaginal cancer: the people who invented it may have had good intentions, but the result will be widespread suffering in the years ahead. Although he makes a point of separating open adoption from the other types, he treats most moves toward openness as steps on a slippery slope. Since, in his opinion, open adoption is so risky, he spends a lot of energy trying to keep it from ever happening. He tries to prevent birth mothers from being "defrauded" of their babies by middlemen who make promises of continuing involvement which can't be kept. He tries to protect potential adopters from being pressured into a meeting with prospective birth parents, because they fear that otherwise they won't be selected to raise the child.

The originators of the concept of open adoption, Annette Baran and Reuben Pannor, also protest the way in which some lawyers and new adoption agencies use open adoption as a marketing tool. "When we developed the concept, we were very idealistic about it," Baran said recently. "What has happened is that the entrepreneurs, motivated by profit, have insinuated themselves into the open-adoption system. They are empathetic but into business.

The opportunists are leaving us idealists gasping for breath.”

The fact that Pierce, on the one hand, and Baran and Pannor, on the other, disapprove of commerce in adoption doesn’t mean, of course, that they have come around to the same point of view. They see themselves as guardians of different interests. Although each side in the open-vs.-conventional dispute presents its approach as the honorable way to serve all three of the parties to an adoption, each also acknowledges that the parties sometimes have conflicting interests. What is right for a birth mother may be wrong for the child, the St. Mary’s Services team observed, and what makes sense for the adoptive parents may not make sense for the birth mother. From the start, the open adoption envisioned by Baran and Pannor has been shaped by the cause of the birth mother. The conventional adoption that Pierce defends often appears to focus on the needs of the adopted child, but its claims about how to satisfy those needs often favor the adoptive parents as well. The irreconcilable difference between traditional adoption (the term that Pierce favors) and open adoption is, as he sees it, the sense of entitlement to be a full and independent adoptive parent versus the sharing of that responsibility with the birth mother; for the adoptee, he contends, one leads to clarity and the other to confusion about who his “real” parents are.

The alignments of open adoption and birth mothers, on the one hand, and conventional adoption and adoptive parents, on the other, can be explained by a basic, if knotty, disagreement about human capacity. Open adoption depends on the optimistic notion that people can handle unfamiliar, even unprecedented, relationships. But, for all its optimism, the concept is also based on the premise that any adoption is second best—that a child should be with his biological parents if that is possible, and, if it isn’t, that his life with his adoptive family shouldn’t cut him off from his biological roots. The optimism about human potential is countered by the negative notion at the source of open adoption.

The National Committee for Adoption turns these views upside down. It is not sanguine about the human ability to adapt to open adoption, and sees no need to test it. On the other hand, it sees no end to the mixture of forces that cause some babies to be available for adoption and some adults to want to adopt them. Pierce and many others believe that, by and large, the American adoption experience has been excellent. An ad for the committee showing a picture of a healthy white infant and written from the point of view of a birth mother declares, “I Know My Baby Will Be Part of a Loving Family Because I’m Choosing Adoption.”

At a 1989 adoption-reform meeting, Reuben Pannor complained about the transformation of adoption from a means of finding homes for homeless children into a way to provide children for childless couples. He described the adoption world as a domain of heartache, and, citing the model of Australia, where the government vigorously teaches family planning, and infant adoptions have dwindled to a low number, he proclaimed the hope that infant adoptions would die out in the United States and become a footnote to the history of American child welfare. If childless couples want to be parents, he advised, they have no basic right to adopt healthy infants; they can always seek out some of the thousands of older, handicapped, or needy children in foster care.

The wide differences between how the two schools view adoption and the complexities of each individual adoption, if only in terms of the divergence of interests of the people involved, mean that neither school is likely to be wholly satisfied by any one study purporting to make a comprehensive judgment about open adoption. But advocates of each type of adoption cite the same ongoing work, by Ruth G. McRoy and her colleagues at the University of Texas, as the most promising research about it. In 1988, McRoy and her colleagues brought out a monograph called “Openness in Adoption,” in which they presented findings from a pilot study of seventeen adoptive families and the birth parents. “Given the balance of the risks and values of openness in adoption, the greatest benefit and the least risk seem to occur in families with semi-open adoptions,” they concluded.

According to the McRoy group, the birth parents in a semi-open adoption can have “the security of knowing” about the child, and may receive occa-

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sional pictures and updated reports. The adoptive family is likely to be more stable without the involvement of the birth parents; the adoptive parents "can avoid the interference of regular contact" with them, but will know that the birth parents are "easily accessible" for any information that might be needed to "help the child understand the adoption." The adoptees have more information than they would be given in a conventional adoption, and can "develop a more positive sense of self" as a result of it, but they "are not subjected to the possible confusion of roles among adoptive parents and birth parents that may occur in open adoptions." The Texas group stopped short of endorsing the Baran-Pannor definition of open adoption, which is also Pierce's, but the researchers leaned toward the open camp. "Some families who begin with a semi-open adoption may later choose to increase the degree of contact with birth parents," they observed. They also cautioned, "Fully disclosed openness, while it has worked very well for some families . . . presents many unanticipated challenges to all members of the adoption triad. The decision to move to fully disclosed openness should not be made lightly."

DURING the months after Rebecca's birth, in August of 1988, Peggy Bass refined her understanding of open adoption to a parable. Rebecca had come to Peggy as a little soul, and Peggy had found the baby's true parents. Everything had gone perfectly; Peggy said she felt that someone was watching out for everyone involved; and her only disappointment about her experience, she said emphatically, was that, since she didn't want to reveal her secret to her parents, she couldn't go on TV and give lectures about the benefits of adoption generally. She and Tom Spaeth, her boyfriend and Rebecca's birth father, displayed a casual attitude even when they discussed big questions raised by Rebecca's adoption, like their views about her religion: they didn't care what faith she was brought up in as long as she was loved, they said, and while Lee was a Protestant and Dan was a nominal but essentially secular Jew, his doting on Rebecca ordained that she was going to be a Jewish American Princess.

Peggy and Tom had returned to their home town, Wilmington, after Rebecca's birth—Peggy living with her parents, and Tom in an apartment—and in September they went to a Renaissance Fair. Peggy saw a booth with a tarot-card reader and said, "Let's have a hoot." Peggy's account continues, "I sit down and ask a very innocent question, like 'What's the best time of the year to get married?' And she lays out all these fertility cards, and she's, like, 'This is not the question that you wanted. This is another question and I'm going to ask it: Did you recently lose a child and are you planning to remarry?' And the woman was telling me, 'There's going to be some pain.' " Pain was a constant for Peggy and Tom, binding them together with their secret but also pushing them apart. Tom worried that they were going to "let the cat out of the bag," and Peggy, having lived in Boston without Tom for two months, considered whether she should try doing the same back home. Peggy and Tom talked about Rebecca a lot: they guessed that Dan, for all his liberalism, would be conservative and a disciplinarian when it came to his daughter, because he was so smitten by her, and that Lee, though she loved Rebecca as much as Dan did, was likely to be the "better 'parent.' " They comforted themselves with the idea that if anything happened to Lee and Dan, Rebecca would come back to them. (In this they were mistaken, for, once the adoption was approved by a judge, they would have no legal tie to her.)

LETTERS from Peggy to the Stones:

September 13, 1988: I've decided to quit my job, drop out of society, and wear live animal hats. Not really. So what's new with you? I miss you all so much—please let me come up and do it again, well, at least visit. . . . Tom and I just wanted to let you all know we are thinking about you, and loving having brought Rebecca into this world. I mean it when I say I would do it again for you. You are all in our prayers. We love you.

September 27, 1988: Tom still has not bought me an engagement ring, not that it matters. I still love him but I've decided to Hell with a customized Dragon interlocking wedding band. I want a DIAMOND and a gold band from Sears. Bland but functional. Also, I want to postpone the wedding until July 20th, our third anniversary, so we can save up enough to put a down payment down on a house. . . .

MAINS HOTEL

I realized this summer on one of my overdue days as Rebecca galloped about my uterus that I needed to just be me. As in a singular individual, not two people in one body, or even two people united in pregnancy, just me. Some nights I miss pregnancy so much, and I miss Boston horribly. I hope being parents is better than you thought. Tom and I are jealous of you all, because you get to see every clever thing that little one does. Tom and I both feel very good about her, we know she'll be wonderful. I miss her little kicks and nudges, all the stuff that was bad or scary has faded like a mist. It's all there but it doesn't seem as important as having brought a little angel into the world. Despite all this sentimentality let me be frank. I love not being MATERNAL, I'm wearing tight jeans and tank tops everywhere.

October 3, 1988: Tom is leaving his job, which is putting a lot of pressure on us. I decided it would be best to postpone the engagement until he is settled career-wise a little bit. This summer taught me a great deal about security—I really need it and I am just a little bit too fragile still to cope with extra stress and tension. So we decided, to keep families happy and credit/bank people paid, we should wait until Tom has a definite positive cash flow to announce the impending nuptials.

We are rather yuppie-like. We were talking about investing in a CD or mutual fund, I am too business-oriented. Most girls my age daydream about either little houses or a career. Since I already have a family (Rebecca, I count her even though she is there) I really want a career for a while before I become a super Good Housekeeping kind of person. . . .

I love Tom beyond everything, he still feels terrible about the pain I went through. He is wonderful to me, and he is so baby-oriented now. Rebecca is a reason that Tom is unhappy with his job—he realized that if he could create life and achieve what he did this summer, he wants a job he feels productive and successful in. I'd really like to come up around my 21st birthday, since Rebecca will be 3 months by then, and that is a great age, and she'll be talking and working on her thesis paper on the theories of gravitational polarity so maybe she can schedule me in for a few snuggles.

DAN couldn't get enough of Rebecca: her little "maaa"s that sounded like a goat's bleating; her alertness; her tiny hands. Cradling Rebecca on his shoulder, he recounted the story of her adoption to friends as if it were a rare adventure. He acknowledged that he was proud of things about Rebecca he had nothing to do with, like her size at birth (eight pounds, twenty-one inches), which to him promised a striking height. Lee turned out to be less ready for her. She felt a lingering sadness about her infertility—since she had miscarried three times in three years, it appeared that she could not sustain a pregnancy—and also felt reverberations from the August weekend when her fear that she might lose Rebecca gave her the sense that she was having another miscarriage. About a month after Rebecca was born, Lee and her friend Miriam Cato were out pushing the baby in a stroller, and Lee was talking about Peggy. Several times, she called her Rebecca's mother. Miriam had liked Peggy, but finally she interrupted to say, "You are Rebecca's mom. I don't want to talk about Peggy all the time. I just want this to be you, me, and Rebecca."

Peggy's letters made Lee feel even more vulnerable. When the third one arrived, Lee took it to a dinner with the Roses, the close friends of the Stones with whom Peggy had stayed in Boston, and read it aloud. The letter set off an evening of talk about whether they should really be worried about how Peggy was doing. The talk carried over for weeks afterward. To Dan the letters said that Peggy had finally opened the lid on feelings she had suppressed during the summer in order to carry out her adoption plan. To the Roses they were reminders of how precarious the adoption had seemed at moments in August, and made them sure they would not choose an open adoption for themselves. "The thing that scares me about it is the risk that you get emotionally committed to a child who isn't even born yet, and that carries with it the risk that you will suffer a terrible loss if the adoption doesn't go through," Jim Rose explained. "The second concern is that you will be in a permanent three-way relationship with someone you haven't really chosen. It's very risky. It could be absolutely wonderful; it could be terrible. There's no way of knowing."

In confident moments, Dan felt that he had experienced nothing to undermine his faith in open adoption. "If I were adopted, I am certain that I would want to know my birth parents," he said in October. "I just can't imagine not." As he saw it, the birth parents were the missing pieces of a puzzle. He retained "enormous respect and affection" for Peggy, and it seemed wonderful to him that eventually Rebecca would be able to experience that, too. "It's not a little thing—where one comes from," he said. Dan also kept imagining himself a birth parent. He

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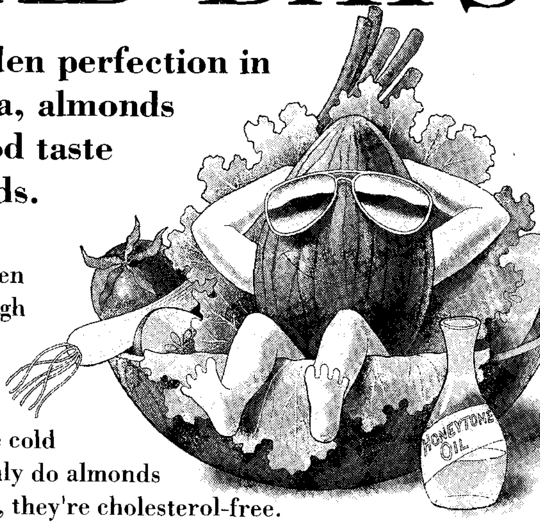

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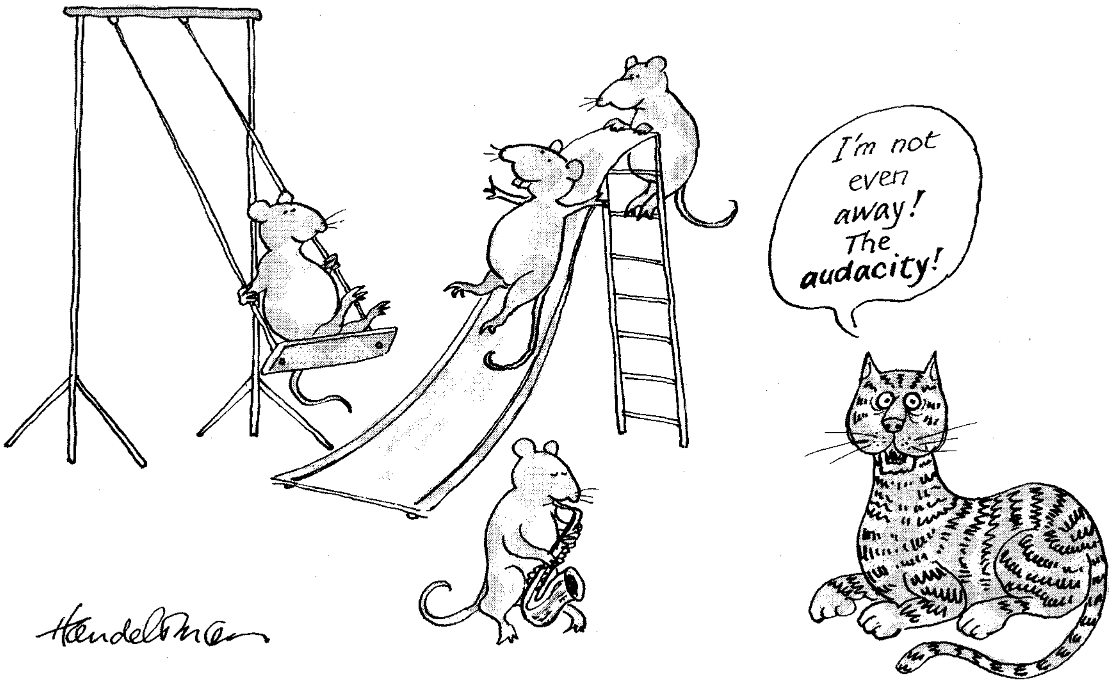
I'm not even away! The audacity!
Handelsman

and Lee made two albums telling Rebecca's story—one with pictures of her birth, the other without. When he saw himself in a picture, he felt lucky, excited, grateful. On the other hand, he said, "When I look at a picture I'm not in, I identify with the birth mother and think that we wanted something so badly that we couldn't do for ourselves." As he looked at pictures of Rebecca and Peggy together, the concept of adoption struck him as base and acquisitive. "Choosing to adopt doesn't feel noble," he said one day. "It feels pathetic."

The cure for Dan and Lee's discomfort was to hope for the best for Peggy. It concerned them that she seemed to have isolated herself from anyone who might pierce her shell of self-control, and they were glad when she started phoning them just to chat. The calls came every ten days or so, at three or four in the afternoon. The talk was about Peggy and Tom, or tax forms that Peggy had to fill out, or nothing very specific—less about Rebecca than they had expected. The Stones began sending packets of photographs of Rebecca to Peggy and Tom, who said that they loved them. The Stones' relationship with Peggy and Tom mystified some of their friends. Miriam Cato said, "I don't know what birth mother wants to see fifty pictures of the baby, no matter how wonderful the thing is. Why would Lee want to send pictures unless Peggy asked?" In October, Lee's mind-body group (the group of infertile women with whom she had learned to meditate) gave her a baby shower. "A lot of people in my group were unbelievably upset by the Rebecca story," Lee said. "They couldn't believe how close we were to the birth mother. It was threatening to them. They worried that the birth mother would haunt us. They thought Dan and I were in over our heads."

In early November, Peggy sent an upbeat letter: "I may have an opportunity to begin a management trainee job ($24,000 per year!!!) full-time after exams. I would have to take night classes to finish college, so it would probably take until '90 to graduate, but I'd be able to move out and live on my own, with my dog, of course." Every once in a while, Peggy felt that she got pushed backward: she had used her parents' address on her Boston hospital records, marking them "Strictly confidential," and in the winter she got a letter asking if she wanted her daughter to take part in an eye test sponsored by the hospital. ("I killed that real fast," Tom said.) Peggy sometimes felt that she was undergoing a trial. She became intolerant of her friends' problems ("They think it's a tragedy when they get home from the beauty parlor and their perm hasn't taken") and occasionally, she feared, too blunt ("I've gotten rid of a lot of leechy friends").

But by January, when she sent the Stones some late Christmas gifts and told them about finding a town house to move into with a couple of roommates, she said she had her momentum back. She was working full time for a clothing store as a salesperson, she reported, and said she was finishing up her college work through independent studies. She was *about to start* "Catholic lessons," she said, so that she could be converted before she and Tom got married.

BY January, Lee's feelings for Rebecca matched Dan's, and they found that they had become an informal adoption-counselling service, telling people who called them how to move beyond infertility to considering adoption, hearing them think out loud about whether to adopt, suggesting how to adopt. A friend's sister in West Virginia knew of a twenty-year-old pharmacology student due in April who was looking for a couple to adopt her baby, and called them. Some Jewish friends knew of an evangelical-Christian birth mother in a commune outside Las Vegas, and asked their help with the question of how the baby she was carrying would fit into their family.

A couple of times, Peggy arranged and then postponed a visit to the Stones. Each revised date for the visit was imminent enough to seem plausible but far enough away to stay out of clear focus. Lee and Dan began to feel as if they had lost touch with her. In mid-February, almost six months after Rebecca's birth, Peggy called and said, "Could you see if Colleen will be around when we come up, which we're thinking of doing soon?" (Colleen Rule was the midwife who had taken care of Peggy and was a friend of the Stones'.) It was Peggy's way of announcing that she was coming, and her indirectness disturbed Lee, reviving her fear of losing Rebecca. Lee wondered if some of their friends were right in predicting that nothing good could come of further contact with Peggy. Dan, on the other hand, said that they had always trusted Peggy and there was no reason to stop. Every time their adoption entered a new stage, the doubts that others had about it were resolved by the nature of the relationship that he and Lee had with Peggy. For lack of a better term to define their complicated ties to one another, Dan proposed that Rebecca's birth parents and adoptive parents think of themselves as *machetunim*—an all-purpose Yiddish word describing intricate relationships by marriage or in extended families. By the week before the visit, Lee was excited, too.

That week, Peggy and Tom were run-down from work, nervous about the trip, and beleaguered by little details, like trying to buy Rebecca a pair of pint-size Vuarnet sunglasses. They described themselves as an old married couple who never went to the clubs anymore: they just worked, got together at one of their places, ate poorly, and went to sleep. Each place was somehow barren: Peggy's town house was sparsely decorated with second-hand furniture, and the refrigerator was almost empty; Tom's apartment, while packed with well-tended hi-fi equipment, was a mess of submarine-sandwich wrappers and other fast-food debris. Peggy was fidgety about missing a rent payment. Even to Tom her story about the rent was vague, but she said she had put her roommates' rent money in her bank account; had lost a credit card; and, because the bank froze her account when she reported the card missing, had found herself unable to write a check to cover the rent. Tom figured that Peggy would solve the problem. His mind was on Boston.

"One part just wants to be strong again and uninvolved, and the other has to be there, has to see her," Tom said. About Rebecca they had questions (Were they like Rebecca's godparents?), speculations ("My body, Peggy's personality," Tom said), and stray thoughts (Peggy said, "Sometimes I think, Oh, my God, I'm going to have a twelve-year-old daughter in the year 2000"). Their thoughts about Lee and Dan led back to Rebecca. Tom remarked one day, "Dan says she's a gift from God. As a couple, they're so strong. Rebecca's either going to be an incredible egomaniac, tempered by Lee's sweetness, or I don't know what."

Peggy responded, "I don't think she'll be modest."

They arranged to stay with the Roses on their visit, and decided that if they had to cut the visit short they would. After looking into buses and flights to Boston, they compromised on a train from Wilmington that would get them in early in the morning.

ON Saturday, March 18th, Lee woke up restless at 5:30 A.M., as if she were going on a trip. Dan got up half an hour later and tried to get rid of his nervousness by stretching. Lee gave Rebecca a chamomile bath and dressed her in purple pants, a yellow shirt, yellow shoes and socks, and a jester's green hat with stars on it. At five minutes past eight, Peggy and Tom stepped off the train at South Station ("I was, like, chewing my fingernails, saying, 'This meeting has to be so careful, to set the tone,' " Peggy said later), and the Stones weren't there. As Tom was dialling their number, Dan walked into the station. Lee hadn't wanted Dan to see Peggy and Tom before she did, so the Stones had been in their car in the taxi line out front, hoping that Peggy and Tom would find them.

"Peggy is wearing her white Japanese baseball jacket, and everything is really familiar," Dan recalled later. "They seem surprisingly refreshed for people who took an all-night train ride. I'm so used to carrying Peggy's bag that I pick it up, and we joke about that. We go outside, and Lee is beaming and so happy. Rebecca is asleep in the back seat."

Dan was putting the bags in the car as Peggy and Tom got their first look at Rebecca, now almost seven months old. Through the rear window he followed the scene: Peggy sliding in and staring at the baby for the first time since August, Rebecca sleepily opening her eyes, Tom staring at Rebecca, too. Peggy thought, she said later, Oh, God, she looks great. Tom thought, She has big, sad eyes, just like Peggy. They drove to the Roses', to see Dina, Jim, and their son, Jacob, and found everything friendly and disorganized. "Lee and Dan are so into Rebecca, but she couldn't crawl yet, so she sort of lay on the ground and paddled," Peggy said. "We handed her back and forth." When Tom held her, she cried. ("You know when you're on a plane that's gonna go down," he said later.) When Rebecca cried with Peggy, too, Dan realized that this was how she acted when she was held by someone she didn't know.

After a while, Peggy and Tom tried to nap. That didn't work, so the whole

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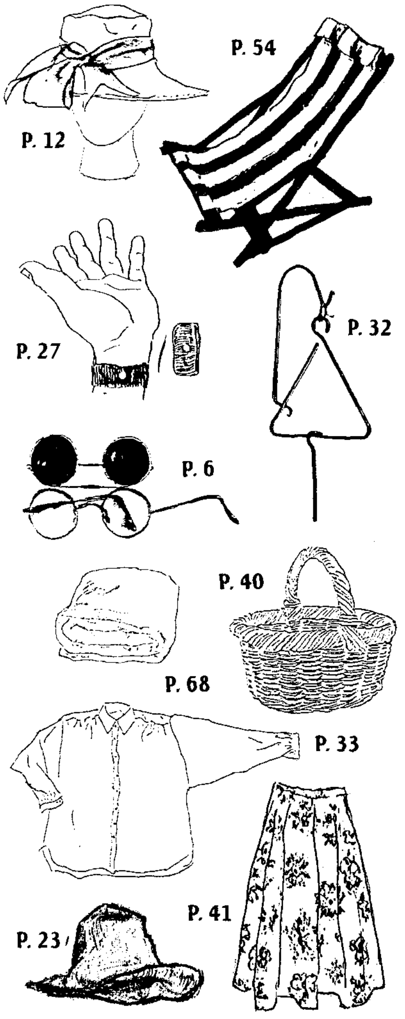

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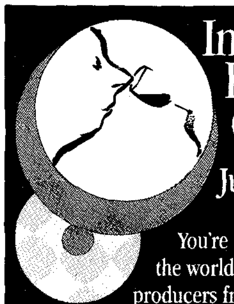

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group took off on errands. They stopped to see a condominium that Dan and Lee had just bought and were renovating. Peggy and Tom lingered in the room that was going to be Rebecca's. Dan heard them say how great it would be for her when she was a teen-ager: "I had an ear out: Would they claim her? But they just didn't do it. They seemed concerned about Rebecca at every level. We did a lot of passing Rebecca around—me to Lee to Peggy, especially. At one point, I was changing Rebecca, and Tom left the room and Peggy watched. It was the first chance she'd had to see Rebecca's little body, and how could she not think of her own body and its relation to Rebecca's? But she was just attentive to Rebecca, and that was that." After they all had lunch out, Tom and Peggy and the Roses went back to the Roses' house, and Jim and Dina suggested that they try another nap. They lay awake talking about how wonderful Rebecca was: how she smelled; what her skin looked like; whether her not crawling yet meant that there was something wrong with her or that she was so smart she was waiting until she could stand up and walk.

At the Stones' old place, to which Dan and Lee had returned with Rebecca, so that she could sleep, Rebecca woke up in a happy mood, and Lee and Dan called Peggy and Tom to say they thought it would be a nice time for them to play with her. By the time Peggy and Tom and the Roses got there, a couple of hours later, Rebecca had gone back to sleep, but she woke up and entertained the group. Lee gave Peggy and Tom some recent pictures of Rebecca, which they joked about trading like baseball cards.

When Colleen Rule arrived, the core of the summer group was reconstituted—Peggy, the Stones, and the Roses, and Tom and Colleen as well—and it felt like a good family reunion: funny, personal, irreverent. Tom and Peggy told stories about their friends back home ("Totally implausible and, if true, amazing stories," Jim concluded) and had the others in stitches. Peggy recalled, "Colleen never really loses it, but she has a great belly laugh, and then you *have* to tell another story, because she's laughing so hard. She kissed everybody, and everybody had these huge lipstick smears."

At the Roses', after midnight, Peggy decided that it felt good to be back in Boston, and Tom felt that his fears about how she would fare on the trip had been baseless. "It was like you plan for a bad storm when you hear the weather forecast," he said. With the summer behind her, Peggy said that she didn't need Tom to serve as a safe haven from the pressures of Boston anymore, as he had, from a distance, in Wilmington. He could be involved.

Lee and Dan sensed the same thing. "He was warm, open, and really plugged in," Lee said.

The next morning, Peggy and Tom came back to the Stones' for breakfast, and to talk about the future. Peggy said later, "We didn't want to interfere or make them feel like non-parents—like they had to show us what great parents they are, and entertain us. It was very hard to come right out and say, 'What do you want from us, in the next eighteen to twenty-one years, as far as Rebecca goes?' They told us, 'We'll just take it one day at a time.' Dan said something that really thrilled me, which was 'The more people who love Rebecca, the better, and the more people she knows who love her, the better.' We're certainly not going to be treated as fake members of the family—this is your Aunt Peggy and Uncle Tom. Dan feels we are definitely members of their extended family, not just Rebecca's. Lee told me a number of times that I was like her sister—because we're almost the right ages, too, for me to be a younger sister. They are very interested in keeping it very family-oriented. I suppose Rebecca, by the time she is eighteen, will feel she has thousands of people who worship her every step—the Rebecca Cult, all the people who wear their hair fuzzed up and drool and suck pacifiers—which wouldn't surprise Dan and Lee at all if it happened. But it was great to have Dan and Lee come right out and say, 'We want you to stay in contact, but let's play it by ear and see what happens.' "

ART SHOW
PARKING

On the way to the train station, Tom asked if Lee and Dan were happy with Rebecca. Lee thought he was fishing for compliments, and teased him. Dan thought Tom was being serious, and said, "We've never been happier in our lives." Rebecca was fussing as they reached the station, and Peggy and Tom dashed—relieved not to have to contend with a baby, they said not long after the visit. They were confident that they would see the Stones again soon. The only question that the weekend raised for Lee and Dan, which they didn't mention to the others, was why Peggy had gained a lot of weight.

Soon after the reunion, Dan remarked, "There's something so poignant about the whole situation. It's two young people who are really in love with each other, and who get pregnant by accident, and don't have the money at this point in their lives to take care of the baby the way they want to; and it's two older people who love each other and have the resources and can't have a child on their own, which they desperately want; and the exchange between them of this baby, with this incredible well of good will and a deep affection for each other. In my own mind, I ascribe much of this to Peggy: We could all behave in ways that would make it impossible to carry on a relationship, but she seems to be the central figure. She's the one who got things in motion. She picked us from the list; she phoned us; she asked Lee to be the first person to hold Rebecca; she phoned us to visit; she never makes us feel anything less than Rebecca's parents, without denying her role in the process. I don't see how she does it, how she has such a clear vision. If we felt that Peggy was covetous of Rebecca, jealous of us, deeply hurt—all of which she has a right to feel—it would make it very difficult for us to have a relationship with her. It would complicate our feelings for Rebecca. It would hurt very much to know she was feeling pain. But that doesn't happen when we're together, when we're in touch. In that sense, this is so much her creation.

"In some ways, I'm grateful, but I also don't think that's the right word. Because Peggy and Tom don't present themselves that way—there's some kind of equality. The feeling that they have a place in our family is stronger than ever. I have no idea how it can be realized. It has a lot to do with them as well as us. It's something we can't know yet. I would like it that we do see each other from time to time, that Rebecca sees them and knows them and takes comfort from that. The whole thing is that I know, as I come to another plateau in this process, it will have to be reinvented in some way. That's not neat. It could backfire in some horrible way. But I can't help believing that our good feelings for them are well founded, that the lengths they've gone to, to insure that Rebecca has a good home with us, are an expression of love."

IN the days after Peggy and Tom left, Lee fantasized about attending their wedding. After Tom gave Peggy a summer of "freedom" in 1989 to make up for the one she had missed the year before, he said, he was going to announce the engagement. He and Peggy had told the Stones they had "pencilled in" a date in February of 1990. "If we brought Rebecca, I'm sure Peggy's mother would know the instant she saw her what was up," Lee said soon after the visit. Tom had also invited the Stones to the house his family owned at Rehoboth Beach. Lee said, "For a moment, I thought, How great! We'll drive to Delaware!"

The Stones conferred with the Roses, and, in Dan's view, Dina came up with the best formulation about the heart of the matter. "Dina said it seemed clear to her that Peggy was not involved with Rebecca in a way you might fear, but that she'd never be far away, either," Dan said. "Peggy doesn't act as if she has a parental claim on Rebecca, but she's not going away. Both things are very nice. That speaks to a contradiction, and it seems very natural."

Jim Rose was more dubious. He couldn't imagine a weekend that could have turned out any better; he envied the Stones for knowing so much about Peggy and Tom, and about their feelings for Rebecca; and he admired the Stones' faith in their ability to rise to unfamiliar challenges—they had made a specialty of it. But he also wondered how long the relationship could last, and thought the Stones were afraid of hurting Peggy and Tom—by cutting ties with them, for example, even if that seemed in Rebecca's best interests. The risks involved for everyone remained high, he felt, and the current chemistry among the four adults was no guarantee that their friendship would continue indefinitely.

"If Peggy and Tom get married, and they have good jobs and kids and things turn out well, who knows how that will affect their outlook, since they'll be in a position to give Rebecca what they didn't think they could last year," he said one day. "Or, if they split up and their jobs aren't going well, they could look to her for satisfaction. They're not going to suddenly turn into dreadful people, but who knows what will happen?"

Peggy and Tom also took stock. They were grateful that they had had the chance to clear the air with the Stones about some issues, like the Jewish Family Service, which had required that Peggy document her expenses during her pregnancy before it would reimburse her. She said, "We got to sit down and talk about how we and the Stones were both led to believe that their main concern was somebody other than us. It just happened to be because of red tape. It wasn't because Elayna Kirschtel"—the social worker assigned to counsel her—"had decided to make my summer the worst of my entire life and create a living hell for me. She was going by a book that didn't apply to the situation. She couldn't give me answers because she didn't know them. They weren't prepared to deal with an open adoption. We finally sat down with Dan and Lee and talked about the money thing—how frustrating it was for me to call every day and nobody called me back. Dan and Lee said it was just as frustrating for them." The Jewish Family Service eventually reimbursed Peggy for toilet articles, some maternity clothes, transportation between Wilmington and Boston for her and Tom, meals, and miscellaneous expenses amounting to fifteen hundred dollars. Adoption expenses for the Stones totalled fourteen thousand dollars. That figure included these expenses of Peggy's; the cost of her meals at the Roses'; a payment to Diane Michelsen, the lawyer who matched Peggy and the Stones; the Stones' trip to meet Michelsen; a trip to Washington to meet Peggy and Tom; and about forty-five hundred dollars for hospital costs not covered by insurance (the bill for Peggy's anesthesia was a thousand dollars). The Stones' expenses were

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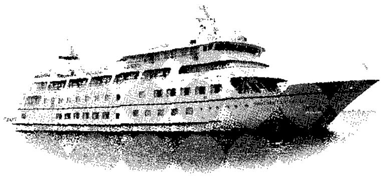

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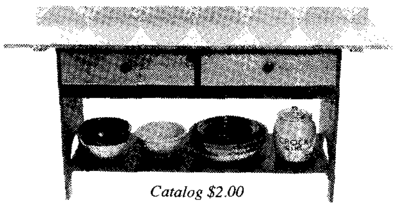

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close to the average cost of a domestic adoption through an agency in 1989, according to the National Committee for Adoption. (However, they had not paid for Peggy's housing, which can add as much as five thousand dollars to the cost of an adoption.)

Peggy was full of advice for potential birth mothers: "For fear that you might have bad days afterward if you give this child up, don't keep this child. If you keep a child to whom you're not able to give what you want to give it, the pain is going to be much worse. To continually have a baby crying because you're not able to be with it, or you're working full time and you're exhausted when you get home and you can't take care of it—that's bad enough, if that's the way you planned it. But if it's unplanned and unexpected, and you really feel in your heart that maybe you should have given the baby up, there's going to be a lot more pain out of it. It's not going to be just your pain—you've taken somebody who didn't ask for it and included him or her. I'm not going to say the pain isn't there, but it's just one of those things. Another thing birth parents have to realize is that it's a decision you live with every day. I think it differs greatly from abortion, because abortion is an ending. This is a beginning. We're looking at a whole life. As long as we're on earth, together or separately, Rebecca is always going to be a part of it. No matter what she does with her life, she's always going to be part of our life picture."

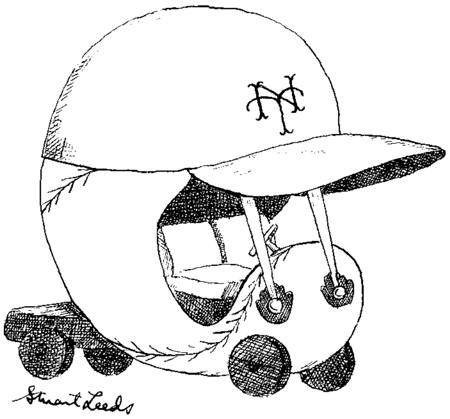
Seeing themselves as a couple, Peggy and Tom looked to their future together. Peggy said it would be hard for her to "play the 'first pregnancy' game": she had already had the initial thrill of seeing her baby on a sonogram and hearing the fetal heartbeat.

Tom commented, "One thing that adoptive parents fear is their child saying, 'My *real* parents wouldn't have done this to me.' Since we haven't gone through any of the sleepless nights with Rebecca, or things like that, I hope I don't say, 'Our *first* child wasn't this hard.' " Both said that contact with the Stones, instead of making it more difficult for them to put the adoption behind them, provided a valuable incentive. Tom said, "It makes us madder that we can't get on with our lives—that we're not moving faster."

Peggy and Tom also reconfirmed the decision not to tell their families. "They take things very personally," Peggy said. "Our families would have assumed it was something they did wrong and they should have done something to fix or prevent it. We didn't feel like having this open to a family forum of two very strong sets of parents telling me how my heart should be feeling about things and telling me what I should do—because that to me wasn't in my best interests and it wasn't in the baby's best interests to have its grandparents guiding this big decision about its life. I'd be put in a position of taking a back seat. We did what we sincerely believe was the right thing to do."

Tom said, "She was in her junior year of college, I'd recently been unemployed, and was employed then but in a low-paying position—there was too much possibility for self-destruction here. I know that every day Peggy and I get stronger is a day closer to the time we feel it's right to tell our parents, when we've got past the pain and can deal with the pain it might give them." Later, Tom said, "After we saw Dan and Lee this weekend, it became less important for me to tell our parents. First, I thought, It's their grandchild. But, after seeing Dan and Lee, I realized it's their *biological* grandchild. Someday, we may tell them."

Peggy said, "A lot of it depends on how things go. If Rebecca wants to be part of our lives, I am not going to hide Rebecca. If she wants to visit us, or stay with us for a week, or if she wants to come down and see us for a month in the summer, when she's older, or if she wants to go to school down here—there are plenty of schools in the Delaware area, and it would be dumb not to give her that chance—she may not want to meet her biological grandparents. Or she may. If she does, I want to give her that opportunity. In that case, I suppose we'll have to give my parents a little more warning than 'Your biological grandchild is coming.' I'm assuming Rebecca will eventually get to the point where she wants to come down and meet people. If she does, that's when I will open it up to my parents for discussion, because then it will be their decision. But until then my parents are not getting a voice in this discussion." As for not revealing to Lee and Dan all the anguish she had suffered, she asked rhetorically, "What do you say?"



ON Thursday, April 6th, Lee and Dan tuned in to watch "L.A. Law," one of Lee's favorite TV shows. A plot line in the previous weeks had been that the married couple in the Los Angeles law firm, played by Jill Eikenberry and Michael Tucker (the Stones referred to them as Jill and Michael), had adopted a baby through an open process. In the April 6th episode, the birth mother showed up at the lawyers' office unexpectedly, three months after signing the adoption papers. Jill and Michael acted pleased to see her, and told her how much they felt like the baby's parents. "She knows who her mamma and daddy are," Michael happily reported. As the Stones summarized the episode, the birth mother replied, "You don't understand. I'm her mother. You'll *never* be her parents. I'm taking her back."

The show upset Lee and Dan profoundly. It was one more on the list of spectacles treating birth mothers as victims, open adoption as doomed, and adoption in general as an exploitative, murky enterprise. They stayed awake late talking about the episode, and at 12:30 A.M. Tom called them. "I have very bad news," he said. "Peggy told her parents about Rebecca, she's run away, and she's pregnant. Some heat's going to come your way." Tom passed on an assortment of other, sometimes alarming, news bulletins: that Peggy had actually taken birth-control pills through the first four months of her pregnancy with Rebecca; that Peggy had become pregnant again not long before the Boston visit, and was pregnant while she and Tom were in Boston; that Peggy had fixed lunch for Tom that afternoon and hadn't said a word about leaving.

After lunch, Tom said later, he had gone back to work and then out to dinner. He had tried to call Peggy but couldn't reach her, and soon afterward he had got a call at the restaurant from his roommate, saying that Peggy's mother had phoned their apartment sounding very worried. Tom went to the Basses' and learned that Peggy had left three notes: one for her roommates, apologizing about leaving town with the rent money that she had previously said she was trying to pay the landlord, as she was expected to, and saying that her parents would cover it; a second for Tom, saying that she couldn't go on like this and that nothing seemed real; and a third for her parents, saying that a terrible thing had happened and that she and Tom were keeping it from them. Mrs. Bass asked Tom, "Did you and Peggy have a child?" Tom sketched their story, and Mr. Bass gave him an intense tongue-lashing. Peggy's roommates were at the Basses', too, and after a while Tom left with them for the train station, to see if they could find any clues to where Peggy might have gone. They couldn't, and Tom eventually called the Stones.

Half an hour later, at 1 A.M., Peggy's mother phoned the Stones. "I know that you have my granddaughter," she said. In a tone they heard as all but threatening, she said she hoped that they were "fine" people who would "love Rebecca the way she deserves." She related that Peggy had spent the morning with her, planning a big family meal for the next night; that Peggy had been hoarding money for months, including the rent money, a sizable sum that her parents had given her to pay her college tuition (which she apparently hadn't paid), and her earnings from working full time (she had not been in school, despite what she told Dan and Lee); and that Peggy had left her a letter telling her all about Rebecca and the adoption.

Peggy's mother admitted that Peggy had said she loved Lee and Dan and believed they were wonderful parents for Rebecca, and that Peggy didn't want Rebecca back. But from talking with Tom and Mrs. Bass the Stones got the impression that Peggy was distraught, particularly about Rebecca's adoption, and that sometime between two and five o'clock on Thursday she had walked away from her regular life. The fact that disturbed them most was that Peggy had been living a triple life: on top of the secrecy about the adoption which she had maintained with her parents, she had apparently not told them or the Stones the truth even about some aspects of her

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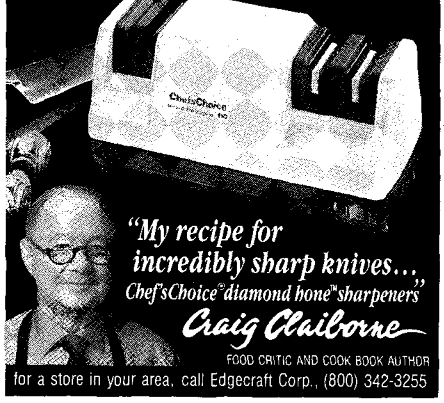

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life that had nothing to do with the adoption.

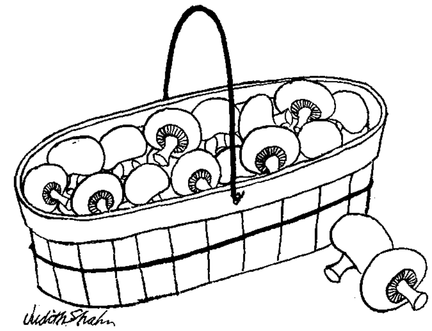
Dan had an independent piece of evidence that Peggy had been deceitful about more than the adoption. The week after Peggy visited Boston, when she was preoccupied with the rent, she had called Dan for advice, and had told him a different version of the rent story. To Dan she said that a roommate was in charge of making the monthly payments and hadn't done so for three months. The delinquent party was off for a few days in New York City, and the landlord was demanding an immediate check for eighteen hundred dollars from Peggy and threatening to have the roommates evicted. Peggy had asked Dan, "Could the three of them be evicted?" He had spent a morning on the phone trying to find legal advice for her. In retrospect, if her mother's version of events was correct, the question she had wanted an answer to must have been "If I take off with the rent money, will my roommates be evicted?"

Lee was disturbed to hear that Peggy had taken birth-control pills during her pregnancy with Rebecca, since that could have left the baby with a severe handicap, and she was angry at Tom for his ominous announcement of that "fact." More critically, Lee grew frightened from talking with him that she and Dan were about to lose their baby, as Jill and Michael had just done on "L.A. Law." For the next couple of days, Lee suffered greatly: a chronic back pain reappeared, she became overvigilant in her supervision of Rebecca, and whenever she picked up the baby she imagined losing her.

The night before Tom's call, Peggy and Lee had spoken for about twenty minutes by phone. Peggy had complained that Tom was in a sour mood, and that they were thinking of getting some counselling to see if they could "get some romance back into their relationship." The main purpose of the call was to make plans for meeting again with the Stones and Rebecca the following weekend in Washington. With hundreds of thousands of others, the Stones had planned a trip to take part in a pro-choice abortion march on April 9th. (Peggy had not made clear whether she would join the Stones on the march: without meaning to criticize their pro-choice position, she had said that abortion "wasn't for her"; more than once, she had mistakenly referred to the event as a "right-to-life" march.) Even after the calls from Tom and Mrs. Bass, they held to their plan, but over the weekend they talked endlessly about Peggy's disappearance. They told their friends they were embarrassed about becoming "adoption bores." They wondered why Peggy and Tom hadn't mentioned that she had got pregnant, if she had, and, overlooking the unwritten rule about taboo subjects, why she hadn't talked more with them about how upset she was by Rebecca's adoption. Lee came to the conclusion that until the adoption was approved by a judge, in the next couple of months, she didn't want any more contact with Peggy and Tom. The situation was too changeable and too frightening.

On Monday night, back in Boston, Dan spoke with both Tom's mother and Peggy's. Peggy was back. She had gone to Orlando, Florida, for two days. Peggy told her mother she wanted to make sure that the adoption was still "open"—that she could stay in contact with Dan, Lee, and Rebecca. Speaking for herself as well as Peggy, apparently, Mrs. Bass said the pictures that Lee and Dan had been sending of Rebecca "were driving the kids crazy," that it would be best if they stopped sending them, and that Peggy didn't want any contact with Lee and Dan for a while. Talking about Rebecca with Lee and Dan, she said, was making it hard for Peggy and Tom to put the whole thing behind them. From the mothers' descriptions, Peggy and Tom sounded so different from the people Lee and Dan knew that it was as if they had been "reprogrammed," the Stones said. Dan told Mrs. Bass and Mrs. Spaeth that he and Lee were happy to know that Peggy was back and safe, and were glad that the secret was out, so Peggy and Tom could have the support of their families. He assured Mrs. Bass that they would not try to get in touch with Peggy but would wait for her to get in touch with them.

Two days later, Paul Dubroff, who ran the adoption program of the Jewish Family Service, reached Lee at home in midafternoon to say that he'd heard from "Tom's lawyer" and that a state administrator had also called him after hearing from a lawyer. Each wanted to know whether an interstate-transfer paper, which would have been required if Rebecca had been born in Delaware and moved to Massachusetts for adoption, had been signed. The paper was not relevant to Rebecca's adoption, since she was born in Boston, but, talking with Dubroff, Lee concluded (incorrectly, she later learned) that the Jewish Family Service had been slow to take steps toward making the adoption final under Massachusetts law.



When Dan came home, he made some calls and discovered that Tom's lawyer had called the week before, and made inquiries of both Dubroff and the state administrator. Instead of being new links in a chain of escalating troubles, they were old news. The Stones were relieved. The following night, Dan phoned Tom. They spoke for an hour. About halfway through the call, Dan raised the subject of the call from the Jewish Family Service. He asked, "What's going on?" Tom said there was no lawyer on retainer; his parents had just wanted to know the legal status of Rebecca's adoption. Tom reported that he and Peggy had broken up, that Peggy was moving home from her town house, and that his dealings with her now were mainly about returning the keys to each other's places. He had grown tired of living behind a shroud of fiction (like the relaxed and happy adoption story that Peggy made up about the months before she got in touch with the Stones, instead of the truth about their difficult decision not to get married six and a half months into the pregnancy, Tom said), and he felt relieved to have their secret in the open. Tom also told Dan that before Peggy went to Florida she had said she had her recent pregnancy aborted, but Tom was no longer certain what to believe. He was at loose ends. "I have so many kinds of grief going on I need a Day-Timer to keep track of them," he said.

Dan and Lee felt that they were in danger. "This whole last part of the experience—I feel on much shakier ground here," Dan said soon after his talk with Tom. "Before, I was concerned about our relationship to Peggy and Tom. Now I'm concerned about something much bigger, which is Rebecca."

IN his first Presidential Address to a joint session of Congress, in February of 1989, George Bush endorsed adoption with zest and a kind of innocence. "And for those children who are unwanted or abused or whose parents are deceased, we should encourage adoption," the President declared. "Let's make it easier for these kids to have parents who love them." Although brief, the mention took adoption beyond the tabloids ("BOY GEORGE TO ADOPT A BABY," the *Star* announced that week) and into the highest circles of respectability. Not long after that, Barbara Bush accepted an invitation to become the honorary chairwoman of the National Committee for Adoption.

On one level, adoption warrants the enthusiasm of the Bush Administration and President and Mrs. Bush, who have two adopted grandchildren, as much as does any current way of forming an American family. Adoptive parents are the only prospective parents who are required to prove their fitness and, in effect, to be licensed for the job—a requirement that some see as an unwarranted intrusion. A remarkable fact, reported by Sandra Scarr, a professor of psychology at the University of Virginia who specializes in adoption, and Richard Weinberg, a psychologist at the University of Minnesota, is that families with unrelated adopted children seem to reflect the traditional American model (husband, wife, and children, intact) more often than do biological families and to have more often withstood the stresses that cause the breakdown of families. However, families formed through the adoption of unrelated children are now less common than families formed through the divorce and remarriage of people with children. Of the hundred and four thousand or so American children adopted in 1986, the last year for which an estimate is available, more than half were adopted by stepparents or relatives.

On another level, however, the President's endorsement of adoption, in a series of slogans rather than a comprehensive program, glosses over the complexity of the situation. In a July, 1989, memorandum to the heads of all departments in the federal government, detailing his Administration's support for the "Adoption Option," and in a November, 1989, proclamation of National Adoption Week, for example, Bush suggested that adoption be viewed as a heroic arm outstretched to the two hundred and seventy-five thousand or so children in foster care (half born out of wedlock) and overstated the ability of adoption to solve the large problem being addressed. A more realistic appraisal is that the lot of those children is less a problem that can be eased by adoption than it is a window on the current state of America's underclass, whose plight sharply worsened in the Reagan years. Nicholas Lemann observed recently in *The Atlantic* that "most experts have been edging cautiously toward the idea that some women have babies out of wedlock, get on welfare, and essentially drop out of the economy for long periods of time." For these women, this is a rational choice, some experts now contend, because the welfare system offers reliable support that the economy does not. For society, it is very costly. Seen in relation to the problems of welfare, and of foster care as a facet of those, adoption appears to offer only modest help. It is an apt expression of the Bush belief in a thousand points of light (widespread individual good works) when the challenge at hand demands a far more intensive social commitment.

"The American people know my position on right to life, favoring adoption over abortion," George Bush has also often declared. To anoint adoption as the alternative to abortion is to link federal policy about the former with the almost fanatical politics surrounding the latter. Before the United States Supreme Court's July, 1989, decision in Webster v. Reproductive Health Services, abortion was already "the most politically divisive legal issue of our time," as Justice Harry Blackmun wrote in his dissent in that case. After the Supreme Court's five-to-four decision in Webster, allowing states to restrict the right to abortion and, in effect, inviting states to regulate abortion closely, the struggle instantly became even more combative. While the ultimate decision by a birth mother to place a child for adoption occurs after she has ruled out abortion, it would be a denial of the large differences between the consequences of those choices to claim that, in given circumstances, adoption should or will generally follow from a no-abortion decision: many women, having rejected abortion, ulti-

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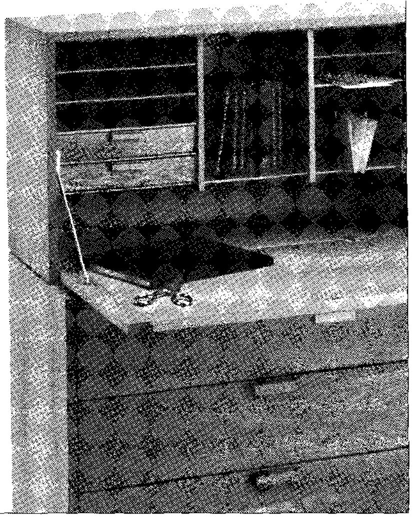

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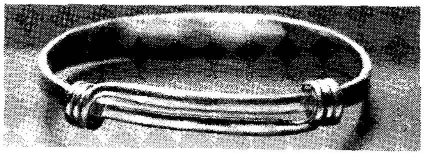

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mately opt for single parenthood in poverty, for example. Decisions about abortion and adoption are likely to be made more clearly if they aren't artificially linked too tightly as alternatives.

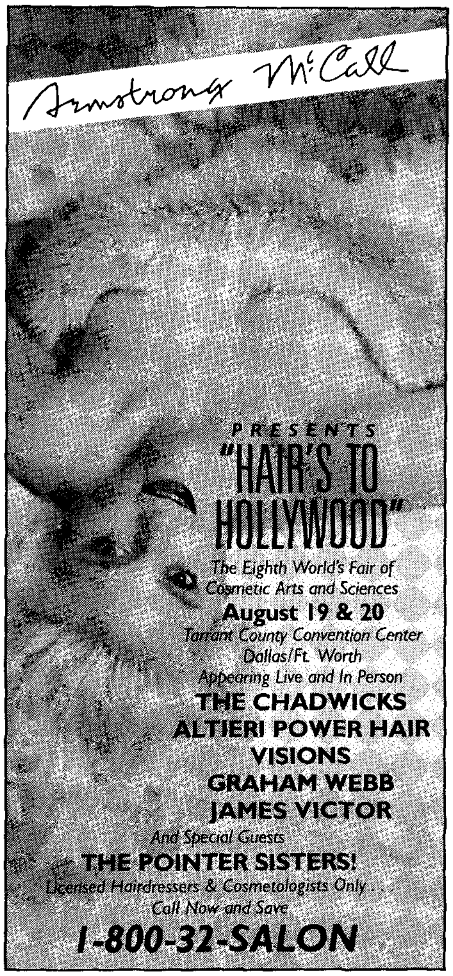
The President's slogan also omits mention of an important third option: birth control. For teen-agers, the rate of sexual activity in the United States and in other industrialized Western countries is approximately the same, but, with the rates of pregnancy and abortion much higher here, the use of birth control seems to be much lower. Nine out of ten pregnancies among unmarried American teen-agers are unintended; four out of ten teen-age girls become pregnant by the time they are twenty. Birth control is the least expensive, best-timed, and most sensible step to take to avoid an unwanted pregnancy, aside from total abstention, which is an unlikely choice for the majority of Americans, since seven out of ten American girls and eight of ten boys now have sex while they are teen-agers. As a matter of politics, emphasizing this option is dicey, for the Catholic Church and some other groups whose members oppose the right to abortion disapprove of the use of birth control as well.

Part of the appeal of the President's yoking of abortion and adoption is that it can be summarized on a bumper sticker. "ADOPTION, NOT ABORTION" seems to affirm life over loss, to offer homes to otherwise phantom children, and to fulfill the dreams of frustrated childless couples rather than leave them wanting. The last point seems especially sound, given the profile of the American woman most likely to have an abortion: according to the Alan Guttmacher Institute, a research group focussing on reproductive health and family planning, she is likely to be unmarried, white, Protestant, and between twenty and twenty-four, living in a metropolitan area, and earning anywhere from eleven thousand dollars on up (the rate of pregnancy among non-whites is twice that of whites, but whites make up a much higher percentage of the total population). She seems to be the "ideal birth mother" described by many couples currently seeking to adopt.

For adoptees and adoptive parents, the abortion debate is particularly charged: decisions by women and their doctors to abort could have deprived adoptees of life and adoptive parents of children; happy adoptive families who think about the question can only be thankful for a birth mother's decision not to abort. Some facts suggest that the decision to have an abortion remains very personal and unusually resistant to any philosophical or religious command: sixteen per cent of women who have abortions describe themselves as born-again or evangelical Christians, even though the leaders of those movements are persistent critics of abortion; and one third of the women who have abortions are Catholic and are therefore acting against the dictates of their church. The President's approval of adoption may help persuade some women not to have an abortion, but it seems likely that, in many cases, his public exhortation won't overcome strong contrary private feelings. The relative consistency in the number of abortions and domestic adoptions of unrelated children over the past decade suggests that, for now at least, the National Abortion Rights Action League's broad pro-choice position, which can be summed up as "Abortion *and* Adoption," is an accurate description of options valued by women—putting aside its desirability as a statement of policy.

The Bush Administration has taken no position on conventional versus open adoption, reasoning that the choice is best made by agencies and prospective birth and adoptive parents. But another risk of linking abortion and adoption in the public mind is that the either/or position of the pro-life and pro-choice movements (or the anti-abortion and pro-abortion movements, as they regard each other) may reinforce the tendency in the adoption world to view conventional and open adoption as similarly irreconcilable, even if only as a result of an unwitting alignment. The Bush Administration, with its pro-life abortion position, is now allied with the organization most closely identified with conventional adoption—for example, through the First Lady's role as honorary chairwoman of the National Committee for Adoption. The alliance may strengthen another battle line that need not have been drawn in the first place.

Even if one believes that the decision to abort or not should not be left to the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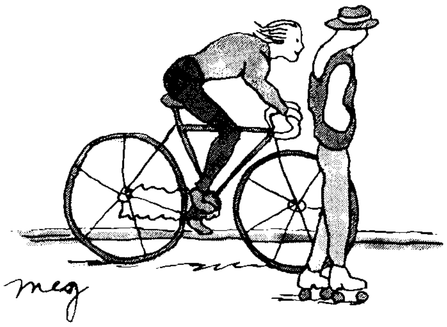
individual, choice in adoption (whether conventional, semi-open, open, or coöperative adoption) is a different matter. It seems much easier to justify allowing all kinds of adoption and more difficult to rationalize prohibiting any one kind, as some advocates on opposite sides of the debate propose. The best available evidence indicates that it is possible to have successful adoptions of each type. Despite the vigor of advocacy for and against open and conventional adoption especially, the distinctiveness of each individual adoption and the inconclusiveness of the evidence about the advantages and disadvantages of each type support the judgment that compelling one over the others, or prohibiting certain kinds, would be a mistake.

SINCE the publication, in 1929, of the anthropologist Raymond Firth's study of adoption among the Maori people, in New Zealand, research on adoption in Oceania—islands and atolls in the Pacific Ocean, some twenty-five hundred miles south and southwest of Hawaii—has yielded a variety of reports on systems that contrast with our own. On the Namoluk Atoll, in the Caroline Islands, adoption has been an economic equalizer, a means of distributing among relatives one of that tiny land's precious resources, its children. On the Manihi Atoll, in the Tuamotu Archipelago, not far from Tahiti, twenty-five per cent of the two hundred-odd residents were at one time adopted, most by blood relatives. The reasons for those adoptions included giving a childless couple the chance to have a family, easing the burden on a large household, providing children who could care for adoptive parents as they aged, and giving an older couple the chance to have a child in the house once again. Adoption has meant that, in the harsh conditions of the island, a child could lose the adults who gave birth to him, but their roles were almost always filled immediately by other parents.

On the main Tongan island, Tongatapu, east of the Fiji Islands, adoption is a high honor. Frequently, adoptees are the favorite children of their adoptive parents, and adoption has increased the adoptees' opportunities for kinship and access to valuable resources, like land. On the Arno Atoll, in the Marshall Islands, teachers have adopted students to show deep appreciation ("adoption in the afternoon"); friends have adopted friends, who become like siblings; young people have adopted older people to repay a debt of gratitude; and couples have adopted children in the more usual arrangement. Biological parents there have revoked the adoption of their biological child when they felt that the adoptive parents were not feeding him well or not bringing him up properly. Years ago, in the Gilbert Islands, immediately to the southeast, almost every child was adopted at birth. According to the anthropologist Robert Briffault, only poor people had to "suffer the mortification of having to bring up their own children."

Advocates of open adoption cite the adoptions of Oceania, where the communities are small and adoptees know their biological families and tend to add to their circles of kinship rather than substitute one for another, as proof that the model is well established, and not the radical innovation it is sometimes made out to be. Yet the societies of that region are so different from ours that the example probably serves better as a reminder of how varied cultural practices can be than as a precedent for American adoption.

Still, the Oceania studies, focussing on the general purposes of adoption there, which are to create new ties of kinship and reinforce old ones, to spur the sharing of resources, to foster alliances, and to contribute to the survival of the population, suggest the good sense of considering adoption in the United States just as dispassionately. While declaring his candidacy at the start of the 1988 Presidential campaign, George Bush defined the context: "I am a man who knows in his heart that it all comes down to family—that all our best endeavors come back to that core." Even as the makeup of American families is in flux (three out of five women with children have jobs outside the home, six out of ten children are likely to live with a single parent at some point before they are eighteen), the traditional image of the family remains powerful, in part because families at their best can provide so much: nurture, stability, economic support, opportunity, and a sense of belonging. Above all, American adoption must be seen as an institution for creating and expanding families.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A decade from now, after commentary has had a chance to catch up with innovations in society, assessing adoption may seem a simple matter. The challenging subjects are more apt to be techniques, like fetal adoption, in which a fetus is removed from the original mother and transplanted to and carried to term in either the adoptive mother or an incubator similar to the incubators now used to care for babies born prematurely. Attention to the difficult question of who is a "parent" (a donor of genes? a gestator? a committed caretaker?) will likely suggest how much more confusing the larger one—the definition of a family—will be, as well.

But even then, as in the case of adoption now, the sense of belonging, of feeling a deep and abiding connection, will go a long way toward defining a family, and make otherwise bedrock factors like economic support seem secondary. In our present psychologically attuned culture, that sense of belonging is a bond, a shadow, and a kind of wound, an anchor, a looking glass, and a home. Once adoption has been accepted as a means of creating a family, and, with it, the idea that biology is not the only door into a family, the potential for families of different types seems capable of great expansion. They can be created through special-needs adoptions, transracial adoptions, international adoptions, and so on, as well as through adoptions by unconventional parents. Instead of being a "second-class" institution, which is how Elizabeth Bartholet, a professor at Harvard Law School, has described American law's pigeonholing of adoption, it can be seen to have its own strengths. In that light, conventional and open adoption become flip sides of a single coin. They are both oriented to the biological family as the ideal (conventional adoption by imitation, open adoption by deference to genetic heritage), and seem to be limited visions of what adoption can offer.

The concern that lingers even for enthusiasts of new visions stems from a perplexing question in any form of parenthood: the effect nurture has on nature. Adults contemplating adoption ask whether they can make a difference to the kind of person a child turns out to be. Since 1875, when Sir Francis Galton, who was a cousin of Darwin, invented what he called "the Twin Method," studies of twins have joined studies of adoptees as primary tools in the attempt to measure the separate contributions of nature and nurture to human development. The pendulum of opinion has swung between the extremes of belief in omnipotent genes, at the turn of the century, and total faith in environmentalism (the impact of parents, families, schools, and the like) in the years following the Second World War.

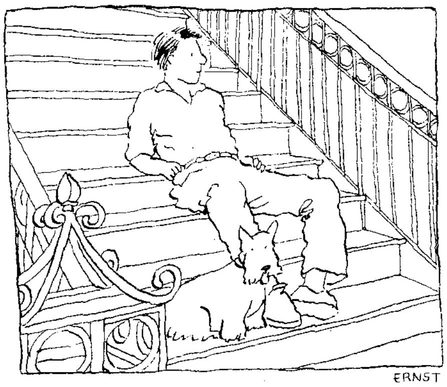
In 1979, the Minnesota Study of Twins Reared Apart, directed by Thomas J. Bouchard, began to look at adopted twins, in the field's most comprehensive recent inquiry. "The evidence supporting the existence of genetic influences upon human cognitive abilities is overwhelming," Bouchard and a colleague, Matt McGue, observed. At least half the variation in I.Q. is attributable to genetic differences, they found; about thirty per cent is linked to family characteristics, like social and economic status; and about twenty per cent is due to factors not shared with anyone else in the family, such as order of birth. Besides the influence of genetics on "special mental abilities" (spatial perception, verbal ability, and perceptual speed and accuracy), a perhaps more surprising contention of the Minnesota team is that genes appear to influence human behavior and personality as much as do environmental factors. The "Jim twins," a set of identical twins named Jim Lewis and Jim Springer, who were adopted by different families in Ohio at four weeks of age, suffered similar migraine headaches at the same age. Identical twins reared separately by a Jewish father in Trinidad and a Catholic mother in Germany scored almost identically on a three-hundred-item personality test called the Multidimensional Personality Questionnaire, which measures eleven traits, from social potency (like forcefulness) and well-being (cheerfulness or gloom) to the avoidance of harm and the need for control.

From one point of view, these findings seem to transform the nature-nurture dichotomy into a victory of determinism over free will. Leon Kamin, a psychologist at Northeastern University, commented not long ago, "The genetic interpretation is getting a much warmer reception now than it would have gotten twenty or thirty years ago, because it suits the temper of the times. If you decide that social problems like poverty and crime are genetic, you don't have to try to do anything about them—people want to forget that there's an environmental influence on behavior as well."

In the adoption world, the Minnesota findings concerning genetic influence have strengthened the hand of open-adoption advocates, by underscoring the benefits both to an adoptee and to adoptive parents of knowing the birth parents, from whom the adoptee inherits his genes. The findings have led the proponents of conventional adoption to redefine it so that the birth parents are asked to provide the adoptive parents and, eventually, the adoptee with as much information as possible about their social and medical histories.

But the obvious interrelation of genetic and environmental influences on behavior, personality, achievement, and other expressions of a child's development seems to make adoption more similar to biological nurture than different from it. Sandra Scarr, the professor of psychology at the University of Virginia, summarized the nature-nurture discoveries by saying, "From all of our research with adoptive families and biological families, it looks like the best environments provide opportunities for children to explore what they might turn out to be, but that, in any case, they turn out to be themselves."

Adoption's function of satisfying corresponding, and changing, social and personal needs suggests that the adoption world will always be unsettled, although outsiders may not often notice: like other narrow, argumentative communities, it is preoccupied with its needs and hopes, and often is lost in the larger American crowd. Scarr says, "Among the traumas that most people face, including adoptees, being adopted is not high on the list." Many adoptive families are, like Tolstoy's happy ones, quietly content. And in some respects even the noisy part of that world has reached a consensus on some issues that once divided it.



Few claim that birth mothers in the nineteen-forties, fifties, and sixties, who had no choice between keeping their children and giving them up for adoption, were fairly treated. Almost no one contends that birth parents and adoptees who wish to seek each other out should be prevented by law from doing so, or from having the help at some point of any legal documents available from state or adoption agencies. The old debate about whether adoptees should be told that they are adopted has given way to the question of when and how to tell them. Adversaries in the ongoing debate concerning the best way to carry out an adoption concur that adoptions involve the interests of three parties—the adoptee, the birth parents, and the adoptive parents—each of whom deserves respect from both the others and from agencies and lawyers and whoever else may bring them together. These new compacts often give priority to the best interests of the child, which is what was supposed to distinguish American adoption from European adoption for almost a century and a half. Of all the issues involved in adoption, the question of how best to serve the interests of the child in adoptions of unrelated infants—adoptions that now represent perhaps a quarter of all legal adoptions in this country—remains most prominent. It frames the debate about how to define those interests with a tender gravity, and infant adoptions are seen by most students of the subject as the most likely to succeed.

IN the months after Peggy told her parents about Rebecca's adoption, she cut off contact with everyone except her immediate family and a small circle of friends; in particular, Tom, the Stones, and the Roses were cut off. Her mother told the Stones that she considered open adoption "a nightmare." Her father said that "open adoption may be great for some people, but not for us." As Tom put it, "There was a lot of anger directed at Massachusetts and the Jewish Family Service." According to him, "The Basses felt that Peggy had been coerced, surrounded by adoptive parents, with no outside opinion given."

Mr. Bass remarked, "We feel that the whole time in Boston she was misled and she was cajoled. When she was going through postpartum depression, she was forced to make decisions. Everyone knows how bad that is. We feel that the whole situation was deceitful." He also said, "What's past is past," and indicated that they were all trying to put the experience behind them.

After Peggy returned from Florida, Tom said, he had about half a dozen limited encounters with her. "She usually wanted stuff back," he said wryly. She was in therapy, he reported, and she asked him for items in his possession which might help her and her counsellor. At her request, he had recently given her a blanket and a formula bottle of Rebecca's. Peggy was very businesslike, and claimed that she was doing great. "The first time everything was 'great,' it had only been four weeks" since she disappeared, Tom observed, adding, "I certainly wasn't great." Tom speculated about why she had gone to Florida, saying, "Maybe that was the last place that she was happy before this happened," in the fall of 1987. He blamed himself for not having recognized how troubled Peggy was about the adoption: "I thought I knew her better than anybody else. I didn't see it." He felt conned by her.

In mid-June of 1989, Tom remarked, "I feel good about Dan and Lee, and the adoption, the way it progressed." Then, referring to the events of the previous few months, he said, "I feel terrible about all this. I'm sure Dan and Lee didn't sign on for this sort of drama." He went on, "I have kept in touch. I like them. But I've decided I'm going to have to back off. At first, my family was saying, 'We're going to have to get the baby back.' Now they're resigned to the fact that she's a biological relation but not a family member. Peggy and I picked Dan and Lee, and we might as well let them do what we picked them to do. The other thing I've been doing is trying to take care of myself—just work and live. Every day is different, and maybe one day it will be different enough so I won't have to deal with this stuff. It was going to happen either way, but it's too bad it blew up in a crisis. This is just my point of view, of course. Peggy's is different, and I have no idea what she'd say."

At the end of June, I received a note in Peggy's handwriting, in response to a letter from me, acknowledging that there were "some discrepancies" between what she had previously reported about her part in the adoption and what had actually occurred. Her original "story was not based on reality" and was "incorrect factually," the note said. "I am now in a different place emotionally thru counseling and realize I should not have contributed to the story."

ON May 26, 1989, almost a year after Peggy first called Lee, the Stones went with Rebecca, the Roses, and some other friends to probate court, in the Old Courthouse in downtown Boston. A hearing on the legal status of Rebecca's adoption had been scheduled, and, according to the Stones' lawyer, the hearing was a formality: the adoption was definitely going to be approved. That morning, Lee had said to Dan, "So this is it, right?"

Dan felt superstitious. "I'm not saying anything," he said.

Lee insisted: "Is it going to happen today? We'll be safe after?"

Dan answered, "No. You can't say that."

The courtroom was crowded with people who had appointments before the judge: relatives contesting wills; men and women in the process of divorce; children waiting to be placed in foster homes. The judge was a rosy-cheeked Irishwoman in her late fifties. Instead of taking the Stones into her chambers for a private hearing, as sometimes happens with adoptions, she asked them to approach the bench with Rebecca, in open court.

The judge said, "I want to congratulate you. I've approved your papers. This is the nicest thing I get to do all day, and I hope you continue to be as happy as you are today." The judge held Rebecca on her lap for photographs, and when the baby tried to pull a blotter off the bench the courtroom burst into laughter. There was no stiffness or formality. The entire proceeding, including the approach to the bench and the walk away from it, took two minutes.

Dan commented, "We were trying

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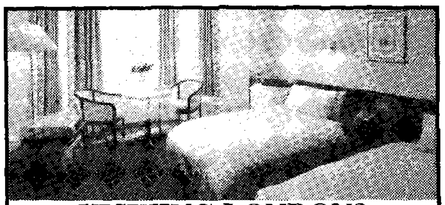

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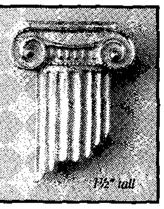

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not to make the legal event too significant, wanting our feelings about Rebecca to be primary, but it was. It was a formal acknowledgment of our bond. It made us feel technically more secure."

Lee said, "When the papers were signed, I felt protected. I felt, *Finally*."

In June of 1989, Lee said, "I oftentimes feel I understand what's going on with Peggy, and can imagine what it would be like to give birth to Rebecca, to leave her with us, to see her that once, to break up with my boyfriend, and then to be reprogrammed by my parents. Mostly, I feel very sympathetic, but I also feel very sad that she's out of our lives and I can't contact her again without her parents' thinking I'm trying to stir something up. But part of me is angry, feeling betrayed, that she didn't say, 'I'm having a hard time,' because we were so open with each other and were so close, especially that last weekend in March. Why did she go on that way for so long? I feel angry at myself that I didn't tune in: it was too good to be true. I feel terrible about this. I don't know what to do. I feel like writing a short note saying, 'We're thinking of you.' But I don't want to upset her if she needs some distance from us. Dan thinks she knows this. I'm wondering if she's angry at us. How could she not be? We have her biological baby. It was so strange to have talked with her the night before and then she was gone.

"I really looked up to her: that she was so strong, to go through that whole summer, the birth and postpartum and after, without cracking. I still feel that way. But now she seems much younger.

"I would do an open adoption again, but I would not carry on the relationship after the birth. I would send pictures, maybe, or a letter after a year, and that's it. It's very important to have that control, and to know about the baby. It's still important to me.

"Tom has been lovely. On Mother's Day, he left a message on our answering machine. His voice is a little shaky, and it always makes me think he's about to reclaim Rebecca, because of that waver. He said, 'Lee, I just want to wish you a happy Mother's Day. I can't imagine anyone being a more wonderful mother for Rebecca. I hope you're having a nice day.' He asked for two pictures: one we call Madonna and Child, of Peggy holding Rebecca. And the 'Give-Her-to-Me' photo—with me watching Peggy with my hands on my hips and my elbows out, and Peggy holding Rebecca."

Dan said, "I think the situation had been set up in such a way that Peggy was leading two lives. There was her family life and her life around having made this decision. I think our coming to Washington prompted the realization that it was impossible to keep them separate—us, Rebecca, her family. We were all going to be very close. Our relationship and her eagerness to share everything with us brought this to a head, and made her realize how untenable the situation was. And as she was moving away from Tom she needed her family; one displaced the other. I think she wanted everything to be a certain way, and it couldn't any longer. At the beginning, when we first talked, she would say she didn't want to tell her parents, because they would offer to raise the baby, and she knew that wasn't right—she needed to do things in her own way. And now she's doing the same thing in reverse. She's keeping us away, in the aftermath; they're both all or nothing. She had a commitment to making sure Rebecca would be all right. That was what she always said—that she wanted to see the baby through. When she came and saw everything was O.K., the trappings of the relationship started to fall away, and she picked up her regular life.

"I write letters to her in my head, letting her know that she can do whatever she wants to, that Rebecca is doing O.K., and that the door is open to her. She must have kept a lot inside, and she's doing what she needs to, to heal. Everyone in Boston who met her wondered about that: she's such a powerful person that we all decided not to press her to do what she didn't seem to want to do at the time, and force her to face what she wasn't. I always felt that it wasn't appropriate for us to make her grapple with her pain, just as it felt wrong to share what it felt like to be infertile. I don't have access to Peggy's thoughts now. Suddenly, I imagine, she had this overwhelming sense of loss.

"I think that the Basses feel that we had a blithe, uninformed, and superficial view of the depth of their daughter's feelings. That we think open adoption is simple and wonderful and everyone should try it, and don't recognize their daughter's struggle and pain. I can understand why they could think that, and I don't quite know what to do with it.

"I feel very fortunate to have had as intimate an experience with Rebecca's birth mom and dad as we've had. I feel I know something about Rebecca that I couldn't otherwise. We have the incredible pleasure of talking about her birth, which Lee and I do a lot—to have been there at that event, and to know something intimate about her ancestry. The experience with Peggy and Tom was very intense, if brief.

"But with that pleasure comes a knowledge of the pain. I can conjure up an image of them, and identify with them, in a way that is very personal, complicated, and sad. I don't know what the implications of that are for the future."

At ten months, Rebecca was a happy, energetic baby. She had a full head of curly red hair and a gummy smile, uninterrupted by teeth. She liked to babble, and scoot on her hands and knees, and when Lee and Dan kissed her neck they were invariably rewarded with a giggle.

"Morning is an especially wonderful time," Lee said. "She pals around with us a lot while we're doing stuff in preparation for moving, which we're about to do, and Rebecca and I were at the bakery the other day with Dan. She was sparky, ornery, and really expressive, and I had this surge of well-being about us as a happy unit. The first few months with her were hard for me, because I hadn't resolved the infertility stuff and I felt shadowed by that August weekend with Peggy and Tom. But that has become hazy. Now we have this wonderful little family. In the morning, we run up and down the hall together. I make coffee. Rebecca loves to sit in her high chair and feed herself finger food. She's very social and extroverted, putting her hand out in this funny Lady Di wave and wrinkling her nose. By this time, I'm totally taken with her. I know it's going to get complicated. She's so assertive. But it's very nice to see the three of us as buddies. It's such a cliché, but I don't think of her as adopted."

—LINCOLN CAPLAN

(This is the second part of a two-part article.)

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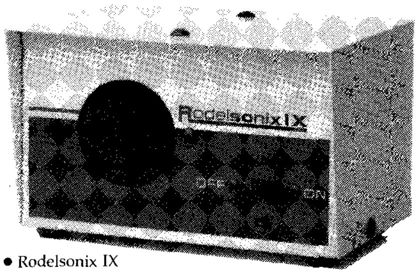

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MUSICAL EVENTS

The Open Road

LAST month, the Juilliard Opera Center presented Ralph Vaughan Williams' "Hugh the Drover," a "romantic ballad opera," for three performances, with a care and devotion that aroused enthusiasm. Frank Corsaro, who directed, has long been a champion of British operas that Britons neglect; in America he has directed Delius's "Koanga," "Village Romeo and Juliet," "Margot la Rouge," and "Fennimore and Gerda," and Rutland Boughton's "Immortal Hour." I hope he goes on to give us productions of Stanford's "Shamus O'Brien," "Much Ado," and, above all (since it is so strange and adventurous a piece), "The Travelling Companion"; and of Vaughan Williams' "The Poisoned Kiss," which looks so attractive in score, and which, Ursula Vaughan Williams says in her life of her husband, "belongs to the world of operetta, demanding polished singing and accomplished acting from pretty women and handsome men." The Juilliard could surely provide those.

"Hugh the Drover" was begun in 1909, when Vaughan Williams remarked to his house guest Bruce Richmond, the literary editor of the London *Times*, "I want to set a prize fight to music; can you find someone to make a libretto for me?" Richmond suggested Harold Child, a *Times* writer, who three years later became the drama critic of the *Observer*. Libretto correspondence between Vaughan Williams and Child—the composer's side appears in Mrs. Vaughan Williams' biography—continued for four years and reveals that most of the dramatic strokes (as in the Strauss-Hofmannsthal operas) were prescribed by the composer. When Child, who had a townsman's notion of picturesque rural life, promoted the heroine to May Queen, Vaughan Williams gently pointed out that the real Queen of May was usually the village prostitute. The 1914-18 war intervened. Toward the end of it, Vaughan Williams became a kind of drover himself: in March, 1918, he was posted to a battery equipped with horse-drawn sixty-pounders. He wrote to his friend Gustav Holst, "The war has brought me strange jobs—can you imagine me in charge of 200 horses!!" And in December:

> We usually march about 10 kilos or more a day . . . it's a tiresome job watering and feeding horses in the dark before we start . . . and finally when one gets to one's destination one has to set up one's horse lines and find water and fill up nose bags etc. and if *this* has to be done in the dark it beggars description—so you see there's not much music-writing going on at present.

Vaughan Williams' next opera, "The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains" (a "pastoral episode" from "The Pilgrim's Progress," later incorporated into the opera of that name), was produced two years before "Hugh the Drover." "Hugh" appeared in 1924, first in a student production at the Royal College of Music and a few days later at His Majesty's, performed by the British National Opera Company, conducted by Malcolm Sargent. (An abridged recording was made, in which members of the Royal College and the B.N.O.C. casts were joined by Peter Dawson; it has been reissued on a Pearl LP.) There have been a few revivals—I twice saw "Hugh" in London—but the opera has never really caught on. And I confess that I felt no enthusiasm for it until I heard the Juilliard performance, and was moved. Now I feel shame for having been so long deaf to the remarkable beauties of the work. Much is wrong with it, and much was wrong with the Juilliard presentation. What is and was right proved all-conquering.

In the first of the published letters to Child, Vaughan Williams set out his ideas:

> I want to try my hand at an opera on more or less accepted lines and preferably a *comedy*, to be full of tunes, and lively, and one tune that will really *come off*. . . .
>
> This fitted in with another idea of mine which was to write a musical, what the Germans call "Bauer Comedie"—only applied to English country life (real as far as possible—not sham)—something on the lines of Smetana's *Verkaufte Braut*—for I have an idea that an opera written to *real* English words, with a certain amount of *real* English music and also a real English subject might just hit the right nail on the head.
>
> As regards the form, *not* Wagnerian and not altogether Mozartian but more the Mozartian with some of his squareness taken away—perhaps a certain amount of the Charpentier-Puccini conversational methods thrown in. . . .

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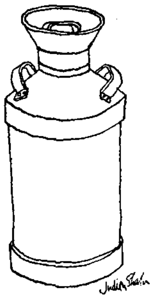
> Only I think the whole thing might be folk song-y in character, with a certain amount of real ballad stuff thrown in.

The composer went on to describe some of the scenes he would like to handle. Child produced a scenario. During those four years of correspondence, "Hugh" thoughts filled Vaughan Williams while he was in the Austrian Tyrol, London, the English countryside, the Italian Riviera. As exigent as Verdi with his librettist Piave, he asked for changes; prescribed rhythms; sent Child tunes for which words had to be found (*prima la musica*); sent a musical sketch embodying his own dialogue ("Perhaps you could do something better without too much upsetting my musical scheme"). The notion of Vaughan Williams as a hempen homespun in matters operatic still lingers (though it should not survive a single hearing of the powerful and masterly "Riders to the Sea"). On the contrary, he was operatically versed. He knew exactly what he wanted, and it was something unusual: an English transformation of what he admired in Mozart, Smetana, Puccini, Charpentier. (He also admired Janáček, but that was post-"Hugh"; he heard "The Cunning Little Vixen" in Prague in 1925.) Other composers left their mark. "Hugh" begins with an English Dr. Dulcamara peddling his wares at the May fair. "Die Meistersinger" lies behind old Mike's crossing of the stage, lantern and horn in hand, calling the hour; behind John the Butcher's serenade of a Mary who has already left the house and is onstage in hiding with her lover, listening to her rejected suitor; behind a second-act ensemble that seems frankly modelled on the famous quintet. He knew the kind of singers he wanted, and had an ideal cast in mind: Maggie Teyte as the heroine; as the hero, John Coates, Elgar's preferred Gerontius and a Siegfried, Tristan, and Lohengrin; as the Constable, Robert Radford, Hans Richter's Covent Garden Fasolt and Hunding, and a Boris Godunov.



Child's diction is dreadful, and Vaughan Williams, who set much fine poetry, cannot escape censure for having acquiesced in it. Yet the badness of bad verse set to good music often seems with the passing of years to become less obtrusive. That happened with the Somma-Verdi "Ballo in Maschera," with the Duncan-Britten "Rape of Lucretia," with Tippett's "Midsummer Marriage." I think no better of Child's verses now than I did when first I heard "Hugh the Drover," but mind them less. The dramaturgy is another matter. Child's task—gathering the scenes that Vaughan Williams wanted into a coherent libretto—was not easy. The basic plot, kin to that of Aaron Copland's "The Tender Land" but set in an 1812 England threatened by Napoleonic invasion, is fine: a young woman of free spirit, hemmed by bourgeois morality, falls in love with an unsuitable stranger, defies her family, and goes off with him. She has in her the stuff of Eva; she is even something of a village Antigone. (When Queen Mary saw "Hugh the Drover," she asked the composer why, since there was a church onstage, the couple had not used it to get married in before taking to the road together.) The prizefight on open stage, with a woman the prize, is an unpleasing spectacle, but perhaps fisticuffs are no more than a brutally realistic representation of the manner of settling differences which Lohengrin and Telramund, albeit amid chivalric trappings, resort to. At one B.N.O.C. performance, the tenor, Tudor Davies, landed a haymaker and ended the show for the night. The Juilliard fight, brilliantly staged by Jake Turner, a member of the British Society of Fight Directors, looked so real that the audience gasped, fearing a similar outcome.

Child did not manage the action featly. Vaughan Williams acknowledged as much when over the next thirty years he kept revising and reordering the second act. In 1933, for a Royal College performance conducted by Beecham (with Trefor Jones, the first Hugh, back in his original role, and the captivating Margaret Ritchie, known to record collectors, as his Mary), he added an afternoon scene, nearly half an hour long, to the start of the second act. I have never heard it but see from the score that it contains some beautiful music and that it gives Mary, Aunt Jane, and John more to sing. Yet it takes the edge off the romantic dawn start of the original second act, when the sun silvers the steeple and the bells chime the hymn tune "York." The composer advised dropping the afternoon scene and said he never wanted to hear it again, but he did not remove it from the score. I hope one day—perhaps on a recording—to hear it. The Juilliard performers followed the composer's counsel, and they made a few unimportant excisions of their own.

To British eyes and ears the production was solecism-ridden. Peter Harrison's set was un-English, a Nuremberg-in-the-Cotswolds. John Gleason's lighting favored mood effects, as if the sun knew it should go in when the actors indulge in a reflective ensemble. Mary wore pendant earrings and in Act II seemed to have slept in them. She also wore pink pumps, not the "very pretty pair of buckled shoes" Vaughan Williams had in mind. Hugh remained hatted, did not even tip his brim, as he greeted Aunt Jane. The cheapjack had just one bottle of potion for sale (in the original, he sells watches), no stock. Worst of all, some of the singers—but not, fortunately, the principals—assumed stage accents, mangling vowels with the "sö refayned" distortions that on the American stage sometimes caricature British pronunciation. This was not, except during the fight, a realistic staging. But it was a lively staging. It moved effortlessly and engagingly.

The principals were Alison England (Mary), Matthew Lord (Hugh), Scott Wilde (the Constable), Franco Pomponi (John), and—the most promising singer—Susan Toth Shafer (Aunt Jane). John Hancock's Showman and his Sergeant would have been more successful had he been more straightforward, less busied with fake accents and fussy attitudes. The opera has many small roles, several of which were well taken. The chorus was excellent. The hero of the evening was the Juilliard Orchestra, conducted by Richard Bradshaw and playing with spirit, eloquence, and beauty.

RACHMANINOFF's opera "Francesca da Rimini" was given its first American performances, in March and April, by the Indiana University Opera Theatre, in Bloomington. There were two performances in English, with a cast of Bloomington students, and then two in Russian, with a cast—mainly graduates—from the Moscow State Conservatory. "Francesca" was played on a double bill with John Eaton's "The Cry of Clytaemnestra," as part of an exchange between the Indiana University School of Music and the Moscow Conservatory. The bill was then taken to Moscow, to the Great Hall of the Conservatory. In Bloomington, an American student orchestra played for both operas, and in Moscow a State Conservatory orchestra. I wonder how the latter took to Eaton's quarter tones.

Rachmaninoff had a brief but apparently brilliant time—two seasons, 1904-06—as the conductor of the Bolshoi Opera, where his "Aleko" had already been played. "Francesca" appeared there in 1906, on a bill with his Pushkin opera "The Miserly Knight." (Antonina Nezhdanova, to her later regret, turned down the role of Francesca, and Chaliapin turned down the two bass roles; they were sung by George Baklanoff.) "Francesca" was recorded some years ago by an eminent cast—Makvala Kasrashvili in the title role, Yevgeny Nesterenko as her husband, called Lanciotto in this version, and Vladimir Atlantov as the fair Paolo—and in this recorded form the opera has gained what circulation it has. Revivals have been exceedingly rare.

The librettist was Modest Tchaikovsky (the librettist of his brother's "Queen of Spades"). He did not heed the advice of whoever wrote II Maccabees: "It is a foolish thing to make a long prologue." There are fifty-seven pages (in the vocal score) for Dante and Virgil as they enter the Second Circle of the Inferno: a depiction of darkness, storms, and the whirlwind of tormented souls from which those of Francesca and Paolo are finally summoned. The lovers' story—the main matter of the opera—is told in eighty pages. There is a twenty-page coda of wordless choral lamentation in the Inferno—Dante and Virgil present, but not singing—over which (somewhat glibly) Francesca and Paolo at last cry out, *forte* in near-monotone unison, the famous line "Quel giorno più non vi leggemmo avante" and the chorus, *fortissimo* in near-monotone unison, responds "Nessun maggior dolore, che ricordarsi del tempo felice nella miseria." "Francesca" is not dramatic. It makes its effect as a kind of tone poem. Within a day or two, I had forgotten almost all the vocal melodies,

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but the memory of the turbulent orchestral writing—the chorus treated as another instrumental division—remains strong. The Russian singers—Elena Bryleva, Arkady Mishenkin, and Yuri Nechayev as the Francesca, Paolo, and Lanciotto of the performance I heard—did nothing to further any dramatic impact. They made handsome sounds and did not act. "Francesca da Rimini" with an unromantic Francesca and Paolo pumping out love duets as if uninterested one in the other—uncharged, unerotic—is a famous love story traduced, made meaningless, however shining the vocalism. But Leonid Nikolayev, the conductor, made stirring and beautiful sounds with the Bloomington orchestra.

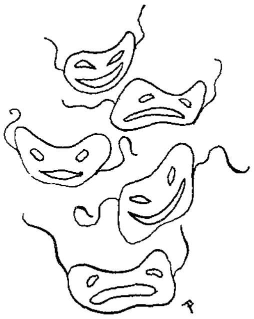
In "Francesca" Modest Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff were not unvisionary: some notion comes across of expanding a few memorable strophes of "The Divine Comedy" into an hour or so's exciting traffic of the lyric stage. But their execution is bungled; even the most sympathetic listener must work to perceive the merits of the piece. "The Cry of Clytaemnestra," on the other hand, is a real opera, direct and powerful. Basic classical matter is fully apprehended in all its grandeur, revered, and reinterpreted with modern musical resources. The opera is a new "Agamemnon," presented from Clytemnestra's viewpoint—a "gloss" that has its own, independent force. The composer writes vocal lines, makes vocal gestures, that strike home. Beside the sheer force of "The Cry of Clytaemnestra," Rachmaninoff's opera faded.

This was the third, and best, production of the piece that I have seen. (It was first staged at Bloomington, in 1980, then at BAM, then by the San Francisco Opera, then in Purchase.) Robert O'Hearn's set was a striking, simplified Mycenae, congruent with the Mycenae that modern visitors discover. James Lucas's staging was cogent. Thomas Baldner, who had also conducted the first performance of the opera, inspired a new generation of students to play the score with urgency and accuracy. *My Clytemnestra*—as in 1980—was Nelda Nelson, whose grasp of the role is complete. She rendered it with passion and power. (If I were Jessye Norman, I would want to sing this Clytemnestra.) All the others were strong.
—ANDREW PORTER

THE THEATRE

Ladies of the Club

Ivan Menchell's "The Cemetery Club," which opened last week at the Brooks Atkinson, is an unpretentious comedy about three Jewish widows who meet every month or so to visit together the graves of their departed in a graveyard in Queens. The extra-cemetery action takes place in the living room of one of them, Ida (Elizabeth Franz), where the women, who are presumably in their sixties, have tea and show off their clothes to one another. There the play begins, and after some preliminary conversation the scenery slides off the sides of the set and we are in the cemetery. This scene change, by John Lee Beatty, is so ingenious that it can be considered part of the action. Once in the cemetery, the widows encounter a Jewish widower, Sam (Lee Wallace), whom Lucille (Eileen Heckart) introduces to the others. A romance begins between Sam and Ida—a romance that is thwarted temporarily by Doris (Doris Belack) and double-dealing Lucille but is eventually repaired. When the final curtain comes down, life has altered, if only slightly, for each of the widows, and it is doubtful there will be any more meetings of the Cemetery Club.



My first feeling about the play, I must confess, was "Get me out of here," but then I said, "Wait a minute." It is what it is, and although the characters and the situations may be stereotypes, there is nothing stereotypical about the performances. The jokes (sight and sound) are familiar in type, but their delivery is firm and fresh. Miss Heckart, experienced in comedy, makes every line sound sharp, and when emotion is called for she is convincing. Miss Franz, formerly Christopher Durang's Sister Mary Ignatius, can be as tender and appealing now as she was tough then; Miss Belack is as sprightly as need be; and Mr. Wallace is probably any yearning widow's dream of salvation. "The Cemetery Club" is only sporadically funny—never as funny as "The Golden Girls," but funny all the same. Lindsay W. Davis's costumes are absolutely right in every instance. Pamela Berlin directed.

"Once on This Island," a bittersweet opera in the Caribbean style, at Playwrights Horizons, with book and lyrics by Lynn Ahrens and music by Stephen Flaherty, who are patent off-islanders, is performed with such spirit and skill that it could almost pass for the real thing. Real thing or not, the songs and dances, in calypso rhythms, are beguiling and diverse enough to make the evening pass quickly. Through it all runs a folk story, complete with gods and goddesses, about a beautiful peasant girl called Ti Moune, who has the gift of healing, and who rescues and cures an aristocratic young mulatto, gravely injured in an accident, and falls in love with him. He, Daniel, is grateful and gracious but in no way responsive, and any potential happiness for Ti Moune is wrecked on the shoals of class. La Chanze is so innocent and charming in the role that her sadness prevails and cannot be offset by all the rhythmic exuberance around her. The songs are melodic and plentiful and come in many varieties, and I can see no purpose in listing them; the fine singers and dancers come in many varieties, too, and listing them is a true pleasure. They include, most notably, Sheila Gibbs, Gerry McIntyre, Kecia Lewis-Evans, Andrea Frierson, Jerry Dixon (as impervious Daniel), and Eric Riley. The good setting, by Loy Arecenas, is an island in the French Antilles on a stormy night; the good costumes were designed by Judy Dearing, and the good lighting is by Allen Lee Hughes. All goes well under Graciela Daniele's direction, and my only reservation is that the amplification is much too loud for the tiny theatre and my tiny ears.

—Edith Oliver

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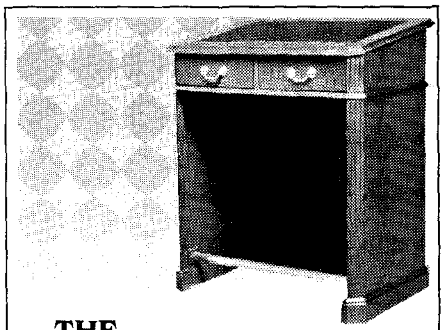

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AROUND CITY HALL

City Games

New York is not on the verge of being smothered by lava, nor does it sit on the San Andreas Fault. The daffodils in Prospect Park and the geraniums—quite a few of them real—that brighten local window boxes are in no danger of being wiped out by the Medfly. There is no doubt, however, that New York just now is a troubled city. Keeping up with the news here requires a daily sorting out of headlines about Joey Fama, Keith Mondello, Moses Stewart, Diane Hawkins, Stephen Murphy, the Reverend Al Sharpton, Sonny Carson, the Reverend Herbert Daughtry, Bong Jae Jang, and Cao Anh Tuan. A year ago, most newspaper readers here had never heard more than two or three of those names, which are of local residents who are in the headlines because of often violent and sometimes fatal confrontations among races. Although the clashes that made the news were found on local police blotters, the headlines have been national. What happened is seen by many not only as reflecting a sad and frightening urban—and, particularly, New York—condition but as "a kind of metaphor for some of the larger racial conflicts in society itself." That is the way Shelby Steele, the producer of the May 15th television documentary "Seven Days in Bensonhurst," described the events surrounding the shooting death, last August 23rd, in Bensonhurst, a heavily white section of Brooklyn, of Yusuf Hawkins, a black teen-ager from the heavily black Brooklyn neighborhood of East New York, when he and some of his friends ventured into Bensonhurst to answer an ad for a used car.

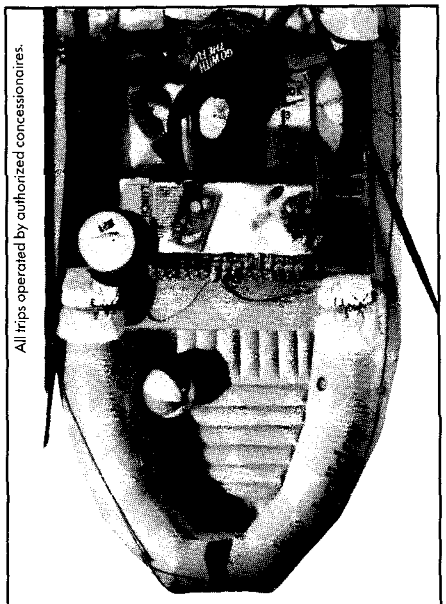
On May 17th, two juries had been debating in State Supreme Court in Brooklyn for more than a week and a half over the fate of two of the Bensonhurst residents, Fama and Mondello—often referred to in press accounts as, respectively, "the triggerman" and "the ringleader"—who were on trial for their parts in the attack that led to Hawkins' death. Just before seven that evening, the Fama jury, made up of six whites, three blacks, two Hispanics, and an Asian, announced its verdict. The courtroom announcement was held up until the city could move in hundreds of policemen to control the violent demonstrations that it had been predicted might follow in the streets outside the courthouse—that, indeed, had been promised if the juries were to vote for acquittals. The Fama jury found him guilty on thirteen counts, including murder in the second degree "with depraved indifference for human life." The penalty for the murder conviction is twenty-five years to life, the most severe available in this state, which has no death penalty. At 8 P.M., David Dinkins, who was sworn in on January 1st as New York's first black mayor, held a press conference in which he said, "Yusuf Hawkins died of racism in the first degree. That is a crime far more common than most of us have been willing to admit." He said that his heart went out to the family of Hawkins and also to that of Fama. The verdict, he said, "does allow us to turn our attention to the process of healing." It is highly questionable whether the verdict on Mondello, which came down the following evening and acquitted the so-called ringleader of murder and manslaughter charges—although convicting him on multiple counts including menacing, riot, and the criminal possession of a weapon—will advance the healing process. After the verdict, supporters of the Hawkins family shouted at the jury foreman, a black woman, "You are finished!" The Mayor had said after the Fama verdict, "We have a long way to go."

Violent confrontations between blacks and Jews or (as in Bensonhurst) between blacks and Italian-Americans are painfully familiar in this city. But recent conflicts in Flatbush between blacks and Jang, a Korean grocer, and between blacks and Cao, a Vietnamese, whose skull was fractured in an encounter with black youths who seemed to believe he was Korean, are reminders that a surge in racial confrontations may lie ahead, here and elsewhere, as America's Asian population grows. Allies of Sonny Carson, a militant local black, have helped lead a largely effective four-month boycott of Jang's and another Korean grocery (accompanied by raucous picketing and demands through bullhorns that Koreans leave the neighborhood), because of what they allege is Jang's store's mistreatment, last January 18th, of a Haitian woman customer. They have handed out leaflets urging blacks not to have anything to do with enterprises run by "people who do not look like us." Some argue that if there is a rise in racial squaring off based on the perception of a new "yellow peril" it will be the result not of alien faces but of econom-

ics. On May 11th, six days before the Fama verdict, Dinkins delivered a dramatic speech at City Hall, which the *Times'* editors, who had not previously been particular admirers of Dinkins (in last year's mayoral primary the paper endorsed Dinkins' opponent, incumbent Mayor Edward Koch), hailed, under the headline "TALKING LIKE A LEADER," as a "ringing personal appeal for racial tolerance and healing" that could "rally the city behind efforts to combat racial prejudice and violence." In the speech Dinkins mentioned the beating death, in Detroit, of Vincent Chin, a young Chinese-American, by two auto workers who thought that he was Japanese and should therefore be held responsible for uncertain times in the American auto industry. "They would have come after any Asian, just as Yusuf Hawkins could have been any African-American who happened down the street that night," the Mayor said. Last August, in an earlier comment on the Hawkins shooting, he had said, resorting to a word that he almost never uses, "Any nigger will do."

Clashes here in which people are battered or killed by members of other races may become national news because there have been so many of them in recent years, and their details have come to be intermingled or repeated as if they were one huge allegory for terrible things happening in this city and in other places. The N train that Yusuf and his friends took to Bensonhurst that steamy August night sets off a flashback to the No. 2 I.R.T. train in which Bernhard Goetz confronted four black youths three days before Christmas in 1984. In the style of today, the allegory is cinematic—a quality especially apt on the local scene just now. "Bonfire of the Vanities," which concerns the clashes between blacks and whites and between the rich and the poor in this city, is currently being filmed here, mostly in the Bronx, while, on the Lower East Side, Al Pacino, a native New Yorker, is starring in "Godfather III," in which some Italian-Americans do not come off well. Uppermost in the minds of many of those keeping close watch on the racial confrontations that currently obsess many in the city is "Do the Right Thing," set in Brooklyn's Bedford-Stuyvesant section, for which Spike Lee, a local resident, bears most of the responsibility. During a black march through Bensonhurst on May 12th, people from that neighborhood held up a banner with the messages "An Eye for an Eye Leaves the Whole World Blind . . . All Bensonhurst Is Not Guilty for a Few" and "Do the Right Thing." Early this month, several blacks from Brooklyn broke ethnic ranks with the boycotters of the Korean-market proprietor. One of them gave him a hundred dollars in small bills along with a quote he attributed to the Lee film: "You will have to make up your own mind about what happened. But ask yourself, which side is preaching hate? . . . Decide for yourself. Do the right thing." Also suddenly notable was the scene in the movie in which the Korean grocer fends off trouble with neighborhood blacks by yelling, "Me no white! Me no white! Me black!" Lee has said that he decided to make "Do the Right Thing" after reading about the Howard Beach case, in which a black man, Michael Griffith, was killed by a car in that nearly all-white Queens area, having been chased onto a highway by neighborhood residents. The place where Griffith (who was from Bedford-Stuyvesant) and his friends stopped when their car broke down was the New Park Pizzeria. In "Do the Right Thing," the white-owned social center is Sal's Famous Pizzeria. By coincidence, the candy store in front of which the Bensonhurst defendants gathered last August to confront Hawkins and the other blacks was also known as Sal's. The Sal's in Lee's movie is, of course, burned down by the blacks in an explosion of racial anger. Fire, and what it might mean for the city if people got angry enough, was on the minds of quite a few New Yorkers as they waited for the verdicts in the Bensonhurst case. Stephen Murphy, Mondello's lawyer (who won the acquittal of one of the Italian-American defendants in the Howard Beach trial), was at one point warned by the judge that some of his rhetoric was "adding fuel to the fire." Early this month, the Reverend Al Sharpton, adviser to the family of Yusuf Hawkins, said of the Bensonhurst jurors, "If they come back with less than murder . . . you are lighting a match to the end of a powder keg and telling us to burn this town down."

On the night of the Fama verdict,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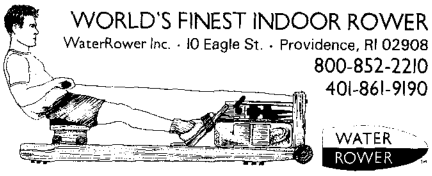
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the Mayor agreed that Sharpton, whose pudgy face, topped by a mop of well-coiffed hair, is now as nationally celebrated as that of almost any New Yorker, was "fanning the flames." Asked why Sharpton—who urged blacks not to vote for Dinkins in last year's mayoral election—got so much attention, the Mayor, who is not fond of the press, said, "My distinguished friends in the media have made too much of Reverend Sharpton." Sharpton had said that his warning of a fiery future for the city if things didn't go as he wanted them to had been taken out of context. Still, the threat was truly alarming to some who live here, seeming, as it did, to move matters ominously in the direction of near-Biblical metaphor, as in the words of the black spiritual, "God gave Noah the rainbow sign, No more water, the fire next time," that long ago gave James Baldwin, a Harlem native, the title for his 1963 book on the direction he saw that race relations might take in this city.

BARRIE'S DREAM: THE WILD GEESE

"I dreamed about Elizabeth Bishop
and Robert Lowell, an old paperback
of Bishop's poetry, a thick china cup
and a thick china sugar bowl, square,
cream-colored, school stuff.
And Lowell was there,
he was talking and talking to us,
he was saying, 'She is the best—'
Then the geese flew over,
and he stopped talking. Everyone stopped talking,
because of the geese."
The sound of their wings!
Oars rowing, laborious, wood against wood; it was
a continuing thought, no, it was a labor,
how to accept your lover's love. Who could do it alone?
Under our radiant sleep they were bearing us all night long.

—JEAN VALENTINE

• •

IN his May 11th address at City Hall, Dinkins did not speak only of race. He described the burdens of local residents who are struggling to scrape by as they cope with a shortage of housing they can afford to live in, with the sense that the environment is unsafe, with the "daily pounding of the prospect of crime" (there were nineteen hundred and five murders in New York last year, and its robbery rate is the highest in the nation), and with the probability that the city's currently precarious fiscal circumstances will worsen. Since last month, the *News* has almost daily run a box under the headline "HARD TIMES," with a logo that shows the famous skyline and an arrow across it, the arrow headed sharply down. The box includes the latest bad news about city revenues and the progress of negotiations on the budget, which is scheduled to take effect on July 1st. The negotiations have gone slowly, since the city relies for about a fifth of its funds on New York State, and the state's budget should have been enacted, according to law, by April 1st, but almost seven weeks later hadn't been passed by the state legislature—a record delay. Much of the Albany holdup was caused by the unwillingness of members of the Republican-controlled State Senate, whose districts are generally upstate or in the suburbs, to vote the funds that leaders of the Democrat-controlled State Assembly insist that the heavily Democratic city desperately needs. The fact that most of the state's blacks and Hispanics live in the city means that even the annual chaffering over the budget, like so much else on the New York scene, is interrupted from time to time with cries of racism.

In the budget season, the city's political leaders rarely brag, as they often do at other times of the year, about New York's being the national capital of finance, the arts, communications, and sports; instead, they dwell on it, accurately, as the recognized capital of AIDS, homelessness, crack (a recent Doug Marlette cartoon in *Newsday* suggested that the coca plant could appropriately be the official New York state flower), and other concerns that swallow up huge amounts of local-government money. In tough times, people "are more likely to lash out," the Mayor went on to say. "The bonds of civility and decency fray." Clearly, more than fraying bonds of civility has caused New York to be seen in recent years as the capital of racial violence.

One result of the increasing danger and grunginess of local life is that some local commentators' predictions of New York's future have also taken a sharp downward turn lately. "In the past month, there has been a distinct odor of collapse and doom around the city" is how Pete Hamill began a *Post* column a few weeks ago. He cited a wide range of complaints from "the growing Army of the Fed-up," many of whom had assured him, he said, that they were thankfully transferring permanently to faraway, sunny places. Hamill's conclusion was "The smell of doom is . . . very real. Those who wake up singing about how they love New York had better deal with it quickly." The *News'* inquiring photographer, John Stapleton, asked seven New Yorkers—male, female, black, white—whether they agreed with Hamill and other columnists who claimed to foresee the demise of New York as a great city. Four of the seven thought that was about right. Dinkins' May 11th speech may have been the first by a local mayor which did not at any point touch on New York's lovability. The voice of the city's famously low-key mayor was strong and angry. ("DINKINS, THE VOLUME UP" was the *Times'* front-page headline two days later.) "DINKINS DECLARES WAR ON HATE" was the headline in the *Post*. "This city is sick of violence," said the Mayor, "and we're aching, and we must heal the pain."

Dinkins' twenty-five-minute speech, by all odds the most important he has given since he became mayor, was delivered at seven-thirty on a Friday evening—that is, during the Jewish Sabbath, which is normally considered politically perilous timing in this largest Jewish city in the world. The Brooklyn City Council member Noach Dear, an Orthodox Jew, said he was "shocked and hurt" by Dinkins' decision and by his refusal to delay the address until Sunday. The speech had to be made at once, Dinkins had explained, because of the urgency of the situation in the Bensonhurst trial. Although the sequestered juries had asked that afternoon for the latest sports scores and a change of clothes—in that order—it was believed then that the verdicts might come at any time.

The timing, which offended some Jewish New Yorkers, may in fact have improved his relations with those local blacks and Hispanics who have complained that, needing Jewish votes in last year's mayoral primary, he is now entirely too compliant where Jewish leaders' wishes were concerned. However, C. Vernon Mason, a black civil-rights lawyer and a close ally of the Reverend Sharpton, was not among those won over to this view. After the speech, he denounced Dinkins as a traitor to his people and an untrustworthy figure, who had "too many yarmulkes on his head," a remark that former Mayor Koch immediately denounced as anti-Semitic. What angered some blacks were the lines in the Dinkins speech which reflected sympathy for the Korean targets of the black boycott in Flatbush: "Recently, too much venom has been injected into the lives of some of our newest Americans: Asian-Americans, especially Korean-Americans." Intimidated by the demonstrators, sometimes numbering in the hundreds, who, in violation of a court order, crowded about the store's entrance, the Koreans' former customers in the mostly black neighborhood had dwindled to a few a day.

Especially offensive to supporters of the boycott had been the Mayor's comment, at a press conference a few days earlier, that the Koreans' alleged mistreatment of the Haitian woman, which had set off the now four-month-long boycott, might have amounted to no more than a scratch, and maybe not even that. As things worked out, Dinkins' penalty for having offended some Jewish New Yorkers by the timing of his speech and some blacks by his comments was to be hailed by an array of local editorial writers for having demonstrated that, as he had promised on Inauguration Day, he was "truly the mayor of all New Yorkers." However, the *News* editorial on the speech began, "It is an extraordinary comment on the state of New York City that the mayor felt compelled to go on television Friday night to ask people to get along." And many of those who praised him for what he had said added the cavil that it would have been better if the often maddeningly cautious Mayor had said it weeks or months earlier. There was no question that there was a sense here of an urgent need for the Mayor to speak out on racial violence. When, on a few hours' notice, his office made an unprecedented request for local commercial television stations to carry his speech live at seven-thirty in the evening, five of the six complied without hesitation, cancelling—at costs ranging from sixty thousand to a hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars each—such shows as "Entertainment Tonight" and "Wheel of Fortune." Some subjects have more transcendent urgency than others. In a decision that many New Yorkers agreed was only sensible, Channel 9, which broadcasts the Mets games, stuck with baseball. The Mets beat the Los Angeles Dodgers, 9–4.

WHEN things are going badly in a place where there are large numbers of sports fans—a description that surely fits most American cities, and certainly New York—a winning streak by one of the home teams can lift local spirits mightily. Politicians have been known to derive great benefits from being associated in the public's—that is, the voters'—mind with such a string of victories. The 1969 reëlection campaign of Mayor John Lindsay, a seemingly hopeless proposition that ended in an upset victory, is often credited to the upset victory of the seemingly hopeless Mets in that year's World Series. A politician's desire to associate himself on a long-range basis with a winning local team had a memorable demonstration in 1978, the year the Yankees won their second World Series in a row. Koch, just starting out as mayor, had announced that he planned to be running City Hall for the next twelve years—a prediction that he later amended to "forever." (The latter did not prove out.) On the day of the Yankees' big 1978 victory celebration, Koch, not a sports fan, kept crying, "We're No. 1! We're No. 1!" And he added, improbably, that "the Yankees are going to win the Series for the next twelve years." The image of the Yankees as symbols of arrogance, sweeping all before them, continued to be invoked in areas far from the ballpark. Last month, at a Democratic fund-raising dinner in Washington, Representative Beryl Anthony, of Arkansas, the chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, evoked the image as he tried to console his colleagues, smarting under the Republicans' constant drumbeat of

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reminders that their party has won the White House in five of the last six Presidential elections: "It's like the Yankees—they didn't win every World Series," he assured them. Actually, the last time they won the Series was in 1978. Unfortunately, there has been little on the sports pages here lately to balance the bad news out of Albany, Bensonhurst, and Flatbush. The baseball season began with ritual talk of a subway series (the last was in 1956, the year before the Giants and the Dodgers moved to California), but it soon subsided.

The Knicks, the local players of "the city game"—that is, basketball—had a late-in-the-season slump after a flashy start. A low point for fans here came in the first round of the playoffs, when the Knicks' traditional rivals, the Boston Celtics, took the first two games in a best-of-five series. Racism is, of course, not unheard of in the sports field. Part of the special hostility between the Celtics and the Knicks reflects the historic Boston–New York rivalry in all fields. And part of it has to do with the fact that the Celtics are the only basketball team that is predominantly white, while most of those on the Knicks roster are black. The Knicks had lost twenty-six straight games to the Celtics in their home territory, the Boston Garden. Early this month, to vast local jubilation, they took three straight games from the Celtics there, eliminating the Boston team from the playoffs. "WHO'D A THUNK IT!" was the big *Newsday* headline. All of a sudden, Pete Hamill seemed to feel a great deal more hopeful about everything. ("Unfurl some flags. Rattle some pots and pans and turn up the music and drink some giddy toasts . . . That final game in Boston was for all of us. . . . It was for the baffled kids struggling in welfare hotels as well as for those adrift in the city without maps. In the end, the Knicks showed us, pride is everything.") The Mayor of the city, who is a sports fan, weighed in on the present triumphant moment. "So far down so early in the series, of course the Knicks could have called it quits," he said. "But . . . they believed in themselves, and this afternoon made believers of the rest of us."

No one expected the Knicks to beat the Detroit Pistons, the 1989 champions, in the next round, and indeed they went down four games to one. (As the juries in the Bensonhurst cases showed signs of growing very weary of their sequestered life, the judge sent them a present one night: the score in the Knicks game, which he knew would be welcome although it was bad news, the Knicks having lost.) However, the single game the local team took in that series, 111–103, played at Madison Square Garden, turned out to be quite a cheery event. Though Spike Lee is often seen wearing a Dodgers (that is, *Brooklyn* Dodgers) baseball cap, that night he wore a New York Giants (that is, *baseball* Giants) jersey as, with some difficulty, he gave a high five to seven-foot Patrick Ewing, the Knicks star. Also in the appreciative crowd, the *Times'* George Vecsey reported, were Woody Allen, Dustin Hoffman, Jason Robards, Jr., Peter Falk, John McEnroe, and Branford Marsalis, the jazz saxophonist. The insulting comparisons here did not involve race but what the locals would surely call class. "The Pistons undoubtedly get cranked up playing in front of Lee Iacocca, Roger Smith, and all those people named Ford," Vecsey wrote. "Can Lee Iacocca give high fives?"

Meanwhile, although Dinkins enjoys a substantial residue of good will among local whites and Asians as the result of his May 11th speech, the hostility toward him among his fellow-blacks—on the ground that he is too close to the white establishment—seems to grow each day, especially in call-ins to WLIB, the local black radio station. The day after the City Hall speech, C. Vernon Mason, along with complaining that Dinkins had too many yarmulkes on his head, told a black audience, "I could not believe what this Negro said last night. . . . He is a lover of the white people and the system. . . . He ain't got no African left in him." Early this month, at a community conference at Columbia University, the Mayor was heckled by a group of blacks who saw him as taking the white side of a real-estate issue. "Remember who you are. Remember you are an African," one young woman protester, standing with a friend, shouted at him. Dinkins turned on her fast. Usually, he is careful to refer to himself as an African-American, now the favored term, but there was no time for this. "Listen," he said, "I was black before you two were born."

—ANDY LOGAN

BOOKS

Man of Letter

William Shakespeare had no particular claim to the letter "S," but for our time, and perhaps for centuries to come, "K" belongs to Franz Kafka. There is hardly a literate tongue or code of current reference in which that angular capital, suggestive of a man splayed (Kafka drew it as such), does not signify Kafka or his bleak other selves: Joseph K.; K. *tout court*. Looking at his signature in a hotel ledger, Kafka glimpsed, momentarily, the abyss of fame into which that initial and the talismanic uses he had made of it might draw his racked life. But even in that moment of ambiguous, dizzying clairvoyance he could not have gauged the dynamics of his future impact, the recognitions that would make the adjective "Kafkaesque" an immediate marker in more than a hundred languages.

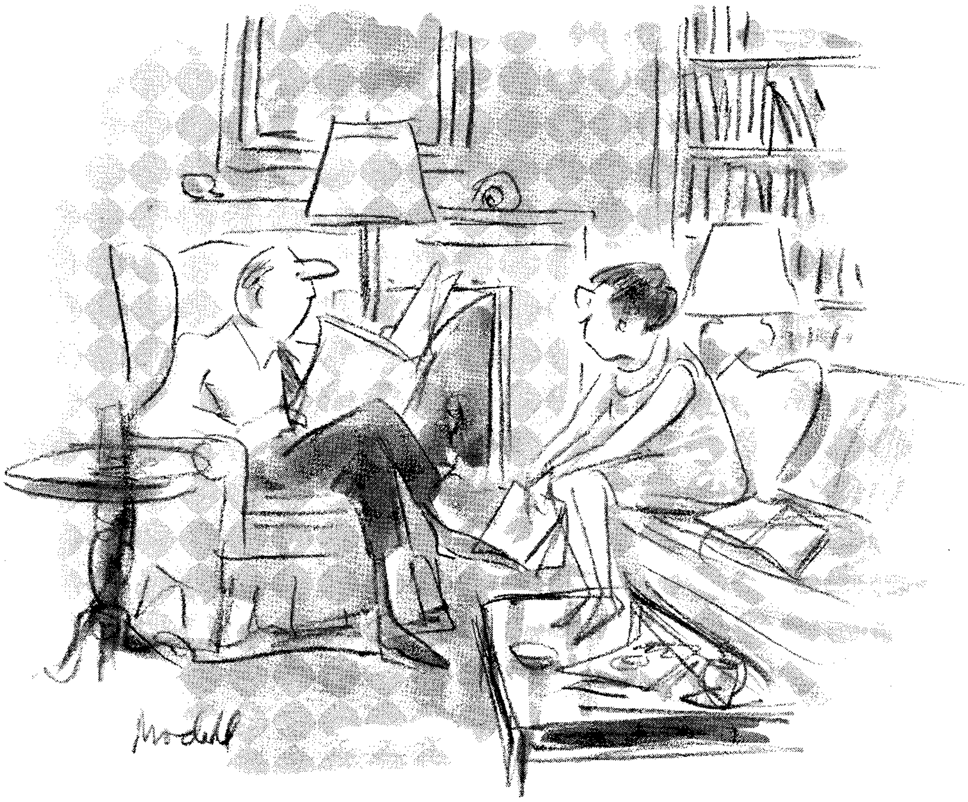
In 1924, dying, literally speechless (his vocal organs, his lungs gone), Kafka was known only to a small circle of Prague and Vienna intimates. He had published a handful of tales and fragmentary fictions. His novels lay in the fragile guise of incomplete manuscripts. Famously, he instructed his friend Max Brod to burn these ghostly remnants. Brod might have felt justified in obeying this injunction, although Kafka's formulation was characteristically tentative. (Observing Brod's anguished hesitations, a malicious colleague intoned, "Max, why don't you burn *your* works instead?") Yet some forty years later W. H. Auden could declare flatly that Kafka's relationship to our age matched that of Dante and Shakespeare to theirs.

Over the past decade there have been major biographies. In terms of critical commentary, debate, explication, the secondary literature on Kafka is mountainous. Severe editorial problems remain. We do not have a textually responsible complete edition, and, as I understand it, important material waits in the Jerusalem archive and, possibly, in Prague. Principally, we lack any comprehensive account of the uncanny tidal motion that bore Kafka's idiosyncratic, localized, numbing vision across the planet, making it the accent and motto of our epoch.

The paradox needs to be stated plainly. Kafka's German prose is translucent like no other. It is at once bonespare and direct. It sounds silly or pretentious to put it this way, but in no other writer except the unknown author of Ecclesiastes do we find light streaming through simple words and spreading a kind of inexhaustible shadow—a concentrated darkness that makes our questioning imperative. Comparison with Scripture is not adventitious: Kafka's brief parable "Before the Law" is acquiring a canonic status in Judaism—and in religious thought in general—that almost no other formally secular text in modern history approaches. Other parables and the close of "The Hunter Gracchus," with its evocation of the "great winds from under the earth," share this mystery of transparency, and share something of the limitless resonance of the immediate which we find in the syntax of the sayings reported of Christ ("Before Abraham was, I am").

But this universality and this modulation from a whisper to a general code is rooted in utmost particularity. Franz Kafka was a German-speaking Jew in Prague. He suffered from tuberculosis and knew himself doomed as early as 1917. His commerce with other human beings verged on the pathological. The furnishings and props of his fictions are closely modelled on those of a decaying Austro-Hungarian bureaucracy. (Marxist critics were among the first to point to the sheer measure of reportage in "The Trial" and "The Castle.") Allusions of a most private, local kind are frequent within passages that have become the main symbols of our political and social condition. Unendurably prophetic of the Auschwitz and Gulag worlds, fables such as "The Metamorphosis" and "In the Penal Colony" can be shown to use circumstances, incidents, references private to Kafka or to his restricted circle. We need guidance toward an understanding of the ways in which this "local habitation and a name" (Shakespeare's telling phrase) met with a global sense of déjà vu and became a passport for our present journeys.

Such inquiries, or any attempts to locate responsibly the macabre twist of



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self-fulfillment in Kafka's private and public foreknowledge, demand extreme tact and penetration. A man who in his death agony could instruct his physician, "Kill me, or else you're a murderer," or who could assure his friends that there was abundant hope in the world "but none for us," may be taken to exceed the bounds of normal literary study and judgment. (Kafka's genius can elicit revulsion.) Little in Pietro Citati's "Kafka" (translated from the Italian by Raymond Rosenthal; Knopf; $22.95) is of help. Drawing copiously but uncritically on available biographies and evaluations, this knowing, chatty "psychobiography" (a pretentious and often vacant genre) adds hardly anything to what we have. It covers yet again such worn themes as Kafka's Oedipal rebellion against his father and the explosion of narrative strength which it triggered in the summer of 1912. Kafka's identification with animals, of which "The Metamorphosis" and "The Burrow" are celebrated instances, is elaborated on routinely. Citati recounts, as have so very many before him, the tortured and torturing meanders of Kafka's engagement to Felice Bauer—his almost hysterical inability to endure the sterile irresponsibility of bachelorhood, on the one hand, and the entrapment of marriage and paternity, on the other. The voluminous, lacerating Kafka-Bauer correspondence, from which Dr. Citati cites familiar bits, has been the subject of an inspired study and commentary by Elias Canetti, to which Citati makes no reference. There are frank errors. A scene at Bridge Inn and one at the Lords' Hotel, both in "The Castle," contain "the only erotic experiences Kafka has ever described," Citati says; by no means—there is explicit sexuality of a feverish order in "The Trial."

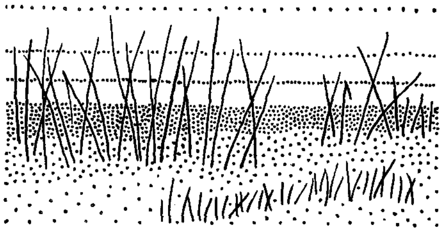
There are better moments in this causerie. Citati is a helpful reader of Kafka's somewhat neglected, incomplete novel "Amerika." Acutely, he perceives in the narrative a buried parable on sleeplessness. Kafka's America is, as Macbeth says, the country that "murders sleep." In reference to "Before the Law"—a text, Citati says, "over which the world's mind has been racked"—he justly concludes that "the category of waiting is at the heart of Kafka's world: God's waiting, mankind's waiting." (This is where Samuel Beckett is one of Kafka's few true heirs.) Citati's comparison of Kafka's abject image of his doglike promenades with Felice Bauer and the enforced final frog-march that conveys Joseph K. to execution in "The Trial" is incisive. And there are poignant evocations of the lamed love between Kafka and Milena, a married woman who lived in Vienna. Commentary does, however, want to fall silent before a relation that could find expression thus: "I am dirty, Milena, infinitely dirty, that is why I make all this noise about purity. No one sings as purely as those who are in the deepest depths of hell: what we think is the song of angels is their song."

But so much is missing in what purports to be a mapping of Franz Kafka's psyche. Citati adverts only in passing to the key matter of Kafka's Judaism, though it is precisely on this point that recent Italian scholarship has been outstanding. No single approach or model is adequate to the complication of the evidence. Kafka's experience of his Jewishness was often terribly close to that of his emblematic attempts at marriage. Both celibacy, so inimical to the Judaic tradition, and wedlock were intolerable. At moments, Kafka spoke of his desperate longing for a Jewish context, of his readiness to kiss the hem of the prayer shawl and the garment of the believer, the inspired Chassid out of the East. Yet his integral aloneness, his intimacies with an absent or worn-out God—indeed, the very profundity of his theological and allegorical parables and sayings—made impossible any straightforward entry into the community. Zionism drew Kafka. It was crucial in his engagement to Felice Bauer and in his companionship with the young "worker for Palestine" Dora Dymant. But Kafka knew that for him there could never be any promised land. The metaphoric tale of the Gates to the Law is implacable: the waiting wanderer dies before a door that has stood open for him alone. And overarching the whole of the Kafka enigma is the conflict between Judaic iconoclasm—the injunction that there can be only one true, revealed body of writing—and the impulse to fiction, to rivalry with the Torah. These several themes have been debated with incomparable finesse by such master readers as Gershom Scholem and Walter Benjamin. No hint of their illuminations or of what is at issue impinges on Dr. Citati.

From a dust-jacket summary of Citati's eminent career we learn that he taught at "the University of Monaco at Baviera." The innocent reader may wonder at this establishment, presumably annexed to the Monte Carlo Casino. Monaco is, of course, Italian for Munich, and Baviera means Bavaria. This howler (from the house of Knopf!) is indicative of the translation within. Sentence after sentence as rendered by Raymond Rosenthal is gibberish, and can be reconstructed only by transposing the English into Italian and then probing at the German source or quotation underlying Citati's statements. German names, such as that of the famous Goethe edition, are mangled. Mr. Rosenthal believes that "mutism" is a common word in English, and that the celebrated Academy for Jewish Studies, in Berlin, should be called "the Superior School."

Kafka's smile would be spectral.

—George Steiner



BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

Because It Is Bitter, and Because It Is My Heart, by Joyce Carol Oates (Dutton; $19.95). This story of unconsummated love is a throwback, a parable about the ongoing tragedy of race relations of the kind that was written a generation ago. The girl is white, the boy is black. They are of the same class, one the daughter of a cocktail hostess and a ne'er-do-well gambler, the other the son of a housekeeper and a disabled workman, and live in the same rundown part of a grim upstate New York town in the fifties. The boy, Jinx, is a high-school basketball star; the girl, Iris, is smart enough to win a scholarship to Syracuse University. They are attracted to each other, teen-ager style, tentatively; when Iris requests Jinx's protection from a subnormal exemplar of the term "white trash," Jinx ends by killing the boy and sabotaging his own athletic career, while Iris mobilizes herself and her heart upward into marriage to a rich intellectual. The

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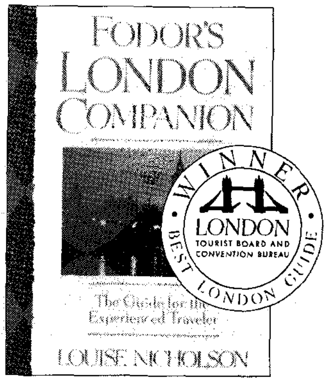
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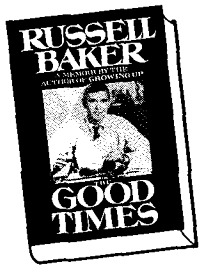

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setup leads one down the dopey avenues of questions like: If Jinx and Iris had been the same color, could they have lived happily ever after? Or is it the murder they got away with that has hopelessly twisted their psyches? Or if Jinx had been white—and therefore less enraged, less humiliated, full of brighter hopes—would he have merely clobbered Little Red Garlock rather than killed him? The scenario gives Oates the chance to write about what she writes about best: working-class parents decaying into alcoholism and despair, an uncle braced in a holding pattern by illusion. Stylistically, too, she is at her best: "Like Kleenex dissolving in water, the Everly Brothers are singing, 'All I Have to Do Is Dream.' "

THE LIFE OF THE AUTOMOBILE, by Ilya Ehrenburg, translated from the Russian by Joachim Neugroschel (Serpent's Tail/Consortium; $9.95, paper). Written in Paris, set mainly in France, first published in Berlin in 1929, this odd, newsreel-style novel, full of extravagant gesture, presents us with images of M. André Citroën playing baccarat, Henry Ford briefing his financiers on the virtues of the modern factory, and a hitherto mild-mannered Parisian named Charles Bernard racing his brand-new 10 H.P. vehicle off the road to his death. An author's note at the outset, which tells us that Ehrenburg has borrowed freely from the world of fact, states, "This book is not a novel; it is a chronicle of our time." Whatever the case, it has been expertly translated, from two early Berlin editions (and not from later, "emended" Soviet ones), and it often reads like a slyly knowing gloss on Marx's "Capital" or an off-kilter training video on the relationships between work, power, and pleasure. After six bitterly funny chapters with titles like "Tires" and "Gasoline," the surreal closing chapter, "Roads," seems only slightly less imaginative than post-nineteen-twenties reality.

GENERAL

FLASHBACKS: ON RETURNING TO VIETNAM, by Morley Safer (Random House; $18.95). The well-known television journalist revisits the scenes of the war he once covered, and his short book, composed of brief chapters, vividly portrays both people and places. Reporting on the war decades ago, Mr. Safer disliked and distrusted our leadership; now he learns that the Vietnamese commanders were at least as ruthless, and that many Vietnamese, who thought they were fighting for independence, not Communism, are disillusioned with the fruits of victory. Given the evidence of the regime's failure, Mr. Safer tentatively and unhappily concludes that the war was a tragic waste, but he is uncertain who is to blame.

C. S. LEWIS: A BIOGRAPHY, by A. N. Wilson (Norton; $22.50). The English novelist and biographer has written a life that attempts to retrieve the man Clive Staples Lewis (1898-1963) from the Lewis cult. Though Mr. Wilson recognizes, with resignation, that Lewis has become a mythic figure, he clearly finds the human being more remarkable, engaging, and entertaining than the myth. While tracing the development of Lewis's religious ideas and the reception of his religious writings, he doesn't let us forget that Lewis was a superb literary scholar and critic and also the author of science fiction and children's books. And he endows Lewis with a sex life, maintaining that Janie Moore, the woman whom Lewis called his adopted mother (his own mother died when he was nine), and with whom he shared a household from the close of the First World War until her death, in 1951, was his mistress. Mr. Wilson wonderfully conveys Lewis's eccentric mixture of bluntness and kindness, which sometimes intensified, sometimes limited, his friendships.

SAMBA, by Alma Guillermoprieto (Knopf; $19.95). This book is about the wretchedly poor people who live in settlements on the steep slopes of the mountains surrounding Rio de Janeiro, and about their devotion to the samba—the dance and the music. The author, a Mexican journalist who writes for English-language magazines (including this one) and is also a former professional dancer, was able to take part in the life of one of the favelas, as the settlements are called, by being accepted as a dancer in its samba "school." From her narrative of the preparations for the great climax of the carnival

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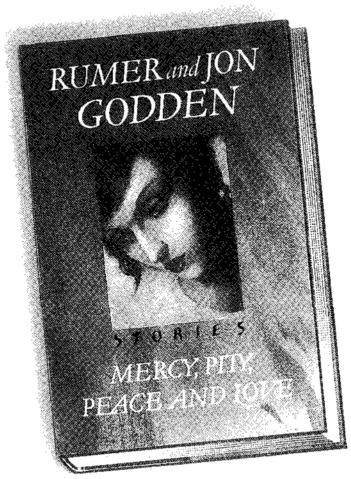

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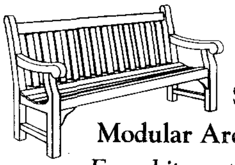

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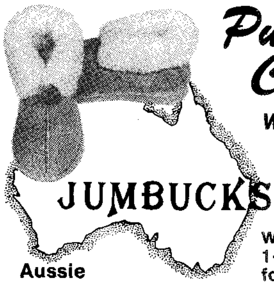

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parade—which included arduous months of rehearsal, and the making of intricate, fantastically colorful costumes—Ms. Guillermoprieto branches out to tell us about the sometimes violent folkways of the favelas, about drug dealing and murder, and about the religion of the black Brazilians, which, under a Christian disguise, harks back to the gods of Africa. She is eloquent and persuasive in bringing it all to life.

Killing the Spirit: Higher Education in America, by Page Smith (Viking; $19.95). A brilliantly carried-out historical overview of American college and university education, intended to show us how and why it has arrived at what the author considers its present lamentable state. Mr. Smith, a noted educator himself, singles out what he calls academic fundamentalism—"the stubborn refusal of the academy to acknowledge any truth that does not conform to professorial dogmas"—as a basic cause of the decay. There are others, no less stultifying: the neglect of teaching in favor of research; the persisting "publish or perish" imperative; the worthless nature of research that feeds off itself (and the bounty of grants); the notion that a "scientific method" can be applied to the study of the arts (which leads to such arid concepts as "postmodernism" and "deconstruction"); the alliance, sealed by research funding, of universities and government and corporate business. Many of these strictures have been made before, but not by any writer as authoritative or as passionately devoted to his subject as Page Smith.

Note: "Countenance of Truth: The United Nations and the Waldheim Case," by Shirley Hazzard, has been published by Viking ($17.95). Nearly all the contents first appeared in *The New Yorker*. . . . "Worst Case Scenarios," a collection of drawings by Jack Ziegler, has been published by Fireside ($7.95, paper). Many of the drawings originally appeared here.

•

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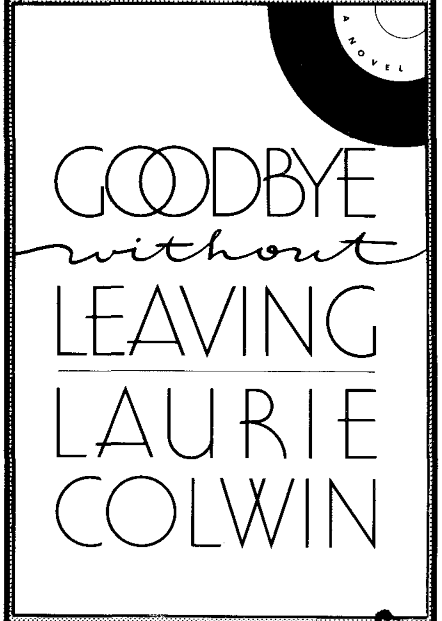

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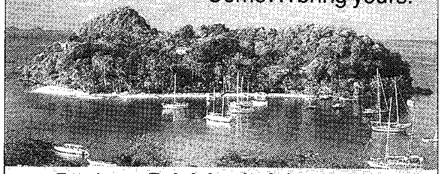

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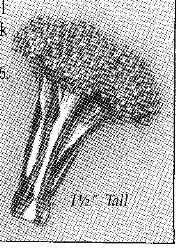

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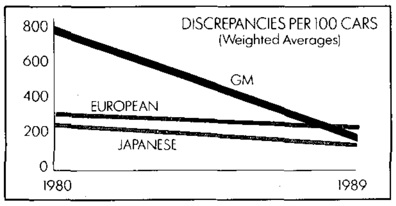

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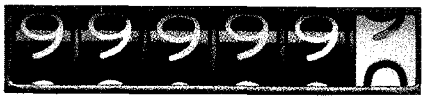

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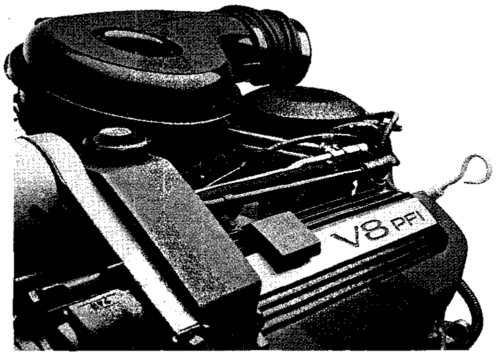

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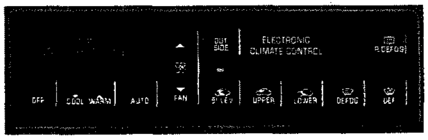

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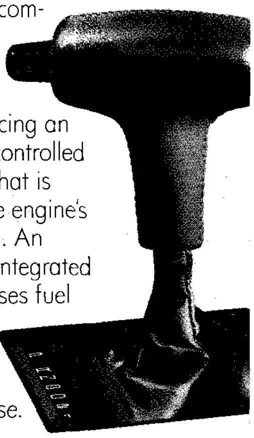

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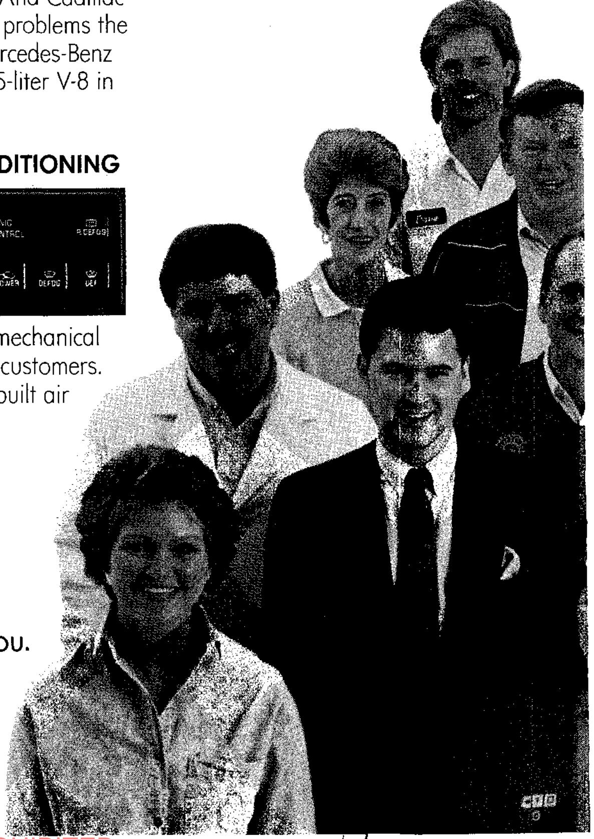

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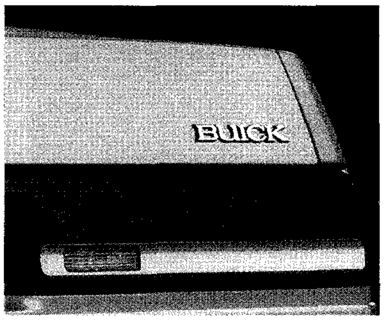

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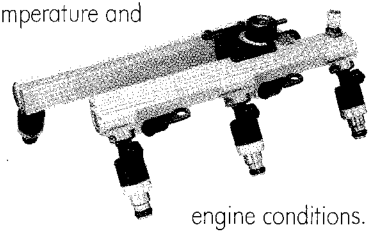

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